

AMRITVANI

By

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: 1 :

Question: *Sanshaya* (doubt) and *dvandva* (duality; conflict; perplexity) are always present in our life. How can we become free of them?

Answer: Sanshay means *duvidhaa* (having to choose between two alternatives). Is this *satya* (true; pertaining to the ultimate Truth) or is that *satya*? To be free of this *dvandva*, *duvidha*, and *sanshay* you need the Gnan of Vedanta.

As long as there is a *duvidha* in the *mana* (emotional mind) about any *karma* (action), *bhoga* (worldly indulgence), *sangraha* (accumulation), or *satya* (what is right and true) nobody's life can be free of tension. That is why Vedanta Gnan – meaning, Gnan about the *Satya* – is the real Gnan.

The second point is, is *dukha* (sorrow) present in your life or not? If it is, you will wish to accumulate wealth to remove it, or you will want some *bhoga* to remove it, or you will want the circumstances to be changed. None of this is in your hands, so

you will remain *paraadheena* (dependent on other factors). Neither will such accumulation be made, nor will you get the bhoga you want. The circumstances are not likely to change either.

Thus, there is one Gnan that can keep you free of dukha without accumulation, indulgences, or conducive situations. Vedanta is needed to give you this Gnan.

The third point is, whatever you make will be destroyed. It will change. Even if it increases, you won't be able to complete it. There will be changes you won't be able to control, and destruction you can't prevent. You may have to part with it, no matter how reluctant you are.

Therefore, a Gnan is needed in your life; a Gnan that makes you capable of remaining unaffected, no matter how many changes come into your personal life or social circumstances. The changes will not upset you once you have this Gnan. You can continue on your path free from fear, doubts, and dualities. For this you need the *sampoorna* (complete; entire) Gnan of the *paramaarth* (highest Truth; supreme goal); not just fragments of it.

This Gnan is not taught in primary schools or for the Matriculation Examination. It does not change when you study for a B.A. degree. It is not a Gnan that is accepted in Bharat (India) but becomes *agnaana* (lack of Gnan) when you go to

America. Vedanta means the ultimate knowledge that can never be changed.

I raise a question on your behalf. New knowledge is always being brought into our life. New discoveries are made constantly. There is no *jadataa* (an unmoving, insensate state) in Gnan, that Gnan is limited to some extent. What, then, is the ultimate Gnan; the limit or summit of Gnan?

Give your attention to this. If you obtain Gnan about the things before you, you will keep learning new things as science progresses. You will be told of new mathematical calculations being developed, and chemical compounds increased. There will never be an end to new discoveries being made and fresh information obtained.

Whatever happens in this world is based on the knowledge of other things. There is no stagnation in this; there is always an ongoing progress. If the voice of one person seems sweet today, the voice of another person will seem sweet tomorrow. If one kind of food seems tasty today, another kind will seem tasty tomorrow. All things fade away as time passes, and new things come into our life.

But what if the Gnan is not about the external objects, but about our Self? What is the source that gives our hand the ability to rise? From where does the eye get its power to see? Which is the point from where our *sankalpa* (mental resolves)

arise? Where is the point where the East begins and the West ends? How do we know which is the past and which is the future? The Gnan from which the *svapna* (dream state) arises, where the *sushupti* (deep sleep state), and the Gnan of the *jaagrita* (waking state) – that is different from both the *svapna* and the *sushupti* – is the Atma.

Gnan about that Atma is Gnan about our *svaroopa* (essence; true form). It is not to be found on the readings of any machine. You cannot pinpoint it in any laboratory. The Gnan about our swarup is unchanging. If you have *nishthaa* (firm belief) in it you will face no *duvidhaa* (dilemma) in the work you do in this world. You will remain free of doubts and dualities, whether you do *bhoga* (enjoy worldly pleasures) or Yoga (attach yourself mentally to Bhagwan); whether you do *raaga* (have worldly attachments) or *tyaaga* (give up worldly interests); whether there is *sanyoga* (union) or *viyoga* (separation); whether there is *jeevana* (life) or *marana* (death).

The Gnan of the *shuddha* (pristine) Atma – which is not contaminated by worldly considerations – will never change. Nor will it die. This Gnan is not different during the stages of waking and deep sleep. Once you develop *nishtha* in this Gnan you can experience the *sukha* (happiness; complete contentment) of *jeevanamukti* (being liberated by pure knowledge) regardless of the country, time, society, or

situation. You will be *e`ka rasa* (uniformly happy) and free from tension and anxiety.

It is necessary, therefore, to gauge our capacity before we embark on any task – even one as simple as lifting a rock.

If you want to make a ball of iron, or an atom bomb, you will first have to understand whether you have the ability to make it. Therefore, you must have the Gnan that is at the root of everything, know its quality of being *eka rasa*, that it is *nitya* (eternal; everlasting). You must know its *asangataa* (quality of being unattached) and its *poornataa* (being complete in itself). This Gnan has no *aham bhaava* (feeling of ‘I’) or *idam bhaava* (feeling of ‘this’ or ‘that’). There is no separating of this-that-you-I-he-she. The result of this Gnan is that you will become free of all apprehensions. You will have a continuous, effulgent *bodha* (understanding; knowledge). A *paramaananda* (supreme happiness) will prevail in your life. You will be able to do all your work without being bothered by external factors.

People who get stuck in the changing Gnan of the objects of this world will continue to remain *dukhi* (sad; troubled). Those who depend on transient objects for their happiness can never be happy for long.

If I bring food from Baroda and eat it here, and take food from here to eat in Surat, I will have to take the trouble of carrying it and making sure it does not go bad. It will be a bother.

However, if I eat the food cooked wherever I go, I will be free of this botheration.

So, leave behind pleasurable objects as you go ahead in life. Don't cling to them and feel sad about leaving them behind. Your Gnan will always be with you; you will always be sukhi. You will be poorna. You will remain *avinaashee* (everlasting) in your Self. It is a *vignaana* (acquired science) that gives you the vighnan of everything.

The Gnan of this one Atma is such that the Gnan of everything is obtained when you get this Gnan. Nobody can ever experience the death or changing of this *avinaashee tattva* (indestructible essence), so once you get the Gnan that this avinshi Tattva is your own Atma, your Self, you become *nirbhaya* (free of fear). You get the capacity to leave anyone or anything. You will be able to retain even when you give up, and give up even when you retain.

Thus, this *asangataa* (not being attached to anything or anyone) to *jeevana* (life) is a form of drama. If you get a proper understanding of the fact that your Atma is indeed completely unattached, you will not fear the death of the body, or be saddened by it. You will not get attached to any *be`vakoofee* (foolishness; stupidity)!

Vedanta means the ultimate and highest form of Gnan; the *svaroopasthiti* (state of being established in your pristine

essence). 'Veda' means Gnan, and 'anta' means its ultimate form. Vedanta is the ultimate form of Gnan that is your Self. Obtain its knowledge. There is nothing in life that is more useful than this Gnan. The Vedanta Gnan is, therefore, supremely useful in life.

Ramachandra Bhagwan obtained this Gnan even before His marriage. So did Shri Krishna. Shri Krishna faced no duvidha even in changing His parents! He ate butter unhesitatingly, whether at His own home or in the home of another. His life was full of inner bliss when he was born, smiling, in the jail. His smile did not change when He suckled the poisoned breast of Putana, or when He did *raasa* (group dancing) with the gopis, played His flute, or faced defeat in war.

Shri Krishna ran away from the battlefield. He departed from this world when an arrow pierced His foot, but His smile always danced on His lips. This unmoving, eternal steadfastness of His life is what the Vedanta Gnan is. It is the most useful thing for our life. It is a fundamental Tattva of life. It teaches us to be unattached and retain mental balance, to see everything without a bias. It enable to be free of *aasakti* (intense attachment) and *raaga-dve'sha* (attachments-aversions). It gives us the *tattva-drishti* (the viewpoint that everything is the essence of the non-dual Brahman that is the substratum of all that exists). It gives a *samataa* (impartiality; balanced outlook)

in interaction, *asangataa* (being free from personal considerations) to our *buddhi* (intellect), and see the one Tattva in all beings and all matter. This is the basic essence, and its Gnan is obtained through Vedanta.

You can fight in a war, sit in a Samadhi (state of deep meditation), or live in the clamor of cities or in solitude in the Himalayas. You are free to do and go as you please, because your sukha is with you. We carry our dreams with us wherever we go. *Svatantrataa-svadheenataa* (being independent; not being dependent on any external factor for our happiness) in life comes from Vedanta Gnan. It is useful for everybody.

There is another angle to this. People generally believe that a person who has many cars, a luxurious house, great wealth, a beautiful wife, etc is *sukhi* (happy, contented). Please understand that this is not true. The Nawab of Hyderabad had one hundred and fifty Begums. This was in recent times. However, he did not recognize his own grand-daughter. He was avaricious to bring her to his palace. Just imagine – a hundred and fifty wives and so many children! This shows that having many wives – or a courtesan having many men – does not mean that they are *sukhi*.

What am I to tell you about wealth? There is a gentleman who lives in this State. He told me, 'I have millions of rupees, both in India and abroad. My Share Market firm is over a hundred

years old. We deal in India and in other countries, trading in billions.’ I have seen him shed tears when faced with a loss of a crore or even ten lakhs. He is always nervous in case there is an Income Tax raid on his premises. He faces duvidha constantly.

This is the state of people who have many women and great wealth. There is no sukha in their heart, no *shaanti* (inner peace), and no *svaadheenataa* (freedom in being happy on their own). Can a person sleep peacefully if he has enemies? Will he get sound sleep if greed eats into his heart? Sleep will elude him.

The Mahabharata has a chapter called ‘Prajagar Parva’. It comes within the section called ‘Udyoga Parva’. It explains how people who have enemies and avid desires are unable to fall asleep easily. It is a fact that sleeping pills are used more by the rich and crooked people than by the poor and simple souls.

Thus, there is no need to think that great wealth, great bhoga, a lot of planning and day dreaming, and *bhaava-abhaava* (having things - not having things) are necessary to be sukhi. Be sukhi within yourself, and continue with your work. Krishna Bhagwan also faced defeat, but He faced it with valor. He also ran away, but without becoming disheartened. You, too, can attain an *adviteeya veerataa* (valor that comes from the Gnan of your non-dual Atma), *eeshvarataa* (having inner power like the

Ishwara), a *shaurya* (bravery; courage), by obtaining the Gnan of Vedanta.

However, it will be sheer stupidity if you want to make your *de`ha* (body) the Brahman! There was a Mahatma whose followers spread the story that this Mahatma will never grow old. When his hair started to turn grey, the disciples would carefully snip away every strand of grey. When his teeth grew shaky, he was taken to another place to get them replaced. Nobody was told that he had false teeth.

There is no need for all such pretense that goes on in this world. Sadhus sit in a so-called Samadhi while their mind dwells on women and men. Their eyes are shut and their back is straight, but their thoughts are not straight. None of this has any connection with the quintessence of life. It only results in unhappiness.

: 2 :

Question: *Shraddhaa* (faith), in the Shastras (ancient books of Dharma) and the Paramatma has reduced. Is it possible to revive it through our own *purushaartha* (human endeavor)?

Answer: Look, my brother, has shraddha reduced in you or has it reduced in society? If you think that society has less shraddha than before, it is your shraddha in society that has reduced.

It is not possible to live without shraddha. Don't you have faith in your mother when she tells you that this is your father? If I were to say, in a hall with a thousand people present, asking people to put up their hand if someone does not believe his mother in this, will there be a single person who will raise his hand?

Thus, you cannot even be a son without having shraddha! Very well; you have a cook who cooks your food. Don't you have faith that he will cook your food properly? Do you have any suspicion that he will poison it? How will you live unless you have shraddha? If you go to a barber for a haircut, do you fear that he will cut your nose? Thus, there is no one who does not have shraddha in his life. When *moorkhataa* (foolishness) or *aasakti* (strong attachments) mingle with shraddha it is not really shraddha.

Who do you have shraddha for? People have faith, 'This dog will not bite me.' But what if you were to step on its tail? Your shraddha will be gone. People believe that their body will

always be there, but that is not real shraddha. We see people who are a hundred years old making plans for the next ten or twenty years. They can't imagine that they may not live that long! They forget how old they are. Foolishness in shraddha is a *dosha* (fault; offence). It is a dosha when *vive`ka* (discrimination; the ability to separate the truth from the false) is disdained in shraddha. Shraddha is our life!

There was a child. He was sent to school. When the teacher taught the alphabet, the boy asked, 'Why does "a" come before "b"? Why shouldn't we say, "b-a" instead?' Now, if a child questions why 'a' comes before 'b' and why 'a' is called 'a', he needs to have shraddha to take his teacher's word for it. A child may ask why the nose is called a nose and why an ear is called an ear. These names are used because of the shraddha that it is so. All names are because of shraddha. All forms are because of shraddha.

With your permission I will elaborate a little further. All images, all forms, are made of lines, whether it is a drawing or a sculpture. It is a play of straight and curved lines. I am well acquainted with a number of artists. There was an artist at the Gita Press who was an alcoholic. His name was B.K.Mitra. He was paid twelve rupees per picture. This was in the early thirties. He made twenty five illustrations in a day, take the payment and spend it all on drink. His wife and children stayed hungry at home. His pictures were so beautiful that people who saw them in the magazine 'Kalyana' would think that he must be a great bhakta! In his paintings Shri Krishna had beautiful lips, beautiful eyes and a beautiful face. In fact, it was my job to

describe Shri Krishna to him before he started the drawing. I gave him the descriptions on the basis of what was written in the Purana that was the subject of the article that included the painting. He was undoubtedly extremely talented.

Thus, the lines that are created are nothing in themselves. They are only the *vinyaasa* (arrangements) of *bindu* (dots). A *re`khaa* (line) is *mithyaa* – it is a relative truth. If you look at a line through a powerful microscope you will see a row of dots forming a line. If you see water you will see the separate drops. If you see milk you will see the sediments.

Very well; a line is a row of dots. A dot has no length or breadth. Therefore, the length and breadth of a line is an optical illusion, whether it is in the form of an ‘a’ or the face of Vishnu Bhagwan, or some film star. What are these? They are lines made of a series of bindus that have no length or breadth, and no connection with each other. This is the reality of a form.

You people sit for *dhyana* (meditation), don’t you? Please don’t mind my saying this, because I am talking on Vedanta. As long as you meditate on a line made of dots, it will not be dhyana according to our Shastras (ancient books on religious philosophy); it will be *dhaaranaa* (conception). When a picture or a *moorti* (image) is created in *de`sha* (space), it is called ‘dharana’ in Yoga – ‘*de`sha bandhaschittaasya dhaaranaa*’ (Yoga Sutra 3.1). Dharana means, we are trying to fix our *mana* (emotional mind) within the periphery of a limited space.

Now, where will your mana go when it becomes *e`kaagra* (single-pointed; focused)? It will be fixed on a bindu. Until you

succeed in doing dhyana on one bindu, it will not be called dhyana. '*Tatraikataanataa dhyaanam*' (Yoga Sutra 3.2).

Now, Sir, when your dhyana is on one bindu it will not contain famous actresses like Hema Malini and Nargis. Nor will it contain Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva. A bindu has no *aakaara* (form; shape). And, where is the aakara? The *adhishtana* (substratum) in which the shape is seen has nothing separate in the form of a bindu. It is all gone. That means, the bindu that is the substratum of everything seen is in 'me'. The bindu and 'I' are not separate because there is no length and breadth in the bindu. The dhyana is of my Self.

Put this aside for now. Let us look at something else. We say, 'Rama-Rama-Rama'. How is it said? A little pressure is put on the throat and we utter 'Rama-Krishna'. It is a little like playing the flute, where the sound changes according to the holes on which fingers are placed. In the same way, we use different points to utter different vowels and consonants. If none of these superimpositions were present, and you think about the sound – if the throat and roof of the cave of the mouth were not there, and sound emerged – where would that sound come from? You will have to hear the sound of the inhaling and exhaling of your breath. Suppose there is no breathing, what sound would it be? It may be a sound like 'o.....' at the time the earth was created. And suppose the earth was not created? It will be 'Sita-Rama' (nothing)!

So you see, we give names and we see forms. Different instruments create different sounds. The sound of tablas is

different and the sound of the shehanai is different. 'Mein' and 'ne' are spoken through the nose, while 'a' and 'ka' are spoken through the throat. In the same way, all names and forms are *kalpita* (imagined). An *aakaara* (shape; form) is imagined in the *niraakaara* (formless) and a *roopa* (form; appearance) is created. *Dhvani* (sound) is imagined in the *ashabda* (utter silence) and it is we who create the differences in sound and call them by different names. Therefore, all *naama* (names) and *roopa* (forms) are *kalpita* (imagined).

What I have said is not suitable for just *aasthaa* (a matter of belief). The naam-roop are in you, made by you, seen by you, and accepted by you. The one in whom the sound Aum is, is even greater than the Aum. He is greater than Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, in whom their forms are made. My brother, Nityabodha Chaitanya told me to speak on some profound *vive'ka* (matters of subtle discrimination) which is why I told you all this. It is a science that is suitable for your understanding.

Therefore, what will we see if we do *vichaara* (give profound thought) on some name? The colors we see are all curved rays of light. The rays of the sun are deflected – this is the roop. And the curving of sound waves is called 'dhvani'. The variety of sounds is not possible without the relationship of sound with creation; nor are the different forms possible. Therefore, you are *jyon-ka-tyon* (as you are)! The sounds keep changing the way sisters keep changing in Gujarat and brothers keep changing in Punjab and Gurus keep changing in Benares! Similarly, the indiscriminate shraddha we have in this changing

world keeps ensnaring us. Indiscriminate *vishvaasa* (staunch faith) traps us.

So, how will shraddha come into our life? The true shraddha is *aatma-shraddhaa* (faith that we are the Atma – not the body – and that the Atma is not separate from the non-dual Brahman that is the substratum of all that exists). You do not have shraddha for yourself; you have it for others. The place of your shraddha is a very weak place. It is a support that changes and dies. Your external *tyaaga* (giving up worldly interests), *sangraha* (accumulations; wealth), *bhoga* (worldly pleasures), and Yoga (attaching yourself to the Paramatma) will be of no use. The other things will all change; what is within, that is you.

E`vam upaasitavyam ayamaatmaa.

(Taittareeya Upanishad 1. 2. 4; Brahma Sutra, Mandukya 2)

(Thus, this Atma is the only thing worthy of worship.)

So catch hold of the source from which shraddha rises, and associate with people who have shraddha. Have the courage of your convictions that whatever proves to be *dukha-daayee* (a cause of sorrow), *bandhana-kaaraka* (a cause of bondage), *asatya* (not eternal) and *jada* (lacking in consciousness) will be given up by you as soon as you obtain the understanding that these are not worthy of shraddha.

Shraddha is for becoming Mukta (liberated; free of worldly bondage), not for becoming bound. So, associate with people who have shraddha. Our shraddha reduces when we keep the company of people who lack shraddha. Therefore, if we want to

increase shraddha, we need to keep the company of those who have it.

We become *moorchhita* (unconscious) when we hold on to one thing. This is to become *jada*, like insensate matter. Go forth, leaving the past behind. '*Charaive`ti! Charaive`ti!*' Go on in life, go ahead, and proceed on life's journey!

: 3 :

Question: What is the difference between *samarpana*, *prapatti*, and *sharannaagati*?

Answer: My brother, there are many words, but where do the meanings come from? What is it that you are asking? Whatever meaning you believe a word to have will be its meaning. *Samarpana* (complete surrender) also means *sharanagati* (taking refuge in Bhagwan); and *sharanagati* also means *samarpan*.

From which viewpoint do you see these? What is the meaning you have filled into these words? The task of filling a word with meaning is yours. What do you wish to convey? And, which word do you use to express the feeling in your heart? If you were to remove the *kalpita* (imagined) from the *buddhi* (intellect), you are the meaning of the *buddhi*. I speak with the assumption that you all study Vedanta, and give serious thought to it. Otherwise I would have spoken in a different way.

Samarpan is done of wealth – a kitten is *samarpita* (completely surrendered) to its mother. The cat picks up the kitten in its mouth in such a way that its teeth don't hurt the kitten. This becomes the kitten's *sharanagati*.

The baby of a monkey clings to its mother – that is *prapatti*. If you use your strength a little, it is *prapatti* and if you leave yourself completely in the hands of Bhagwan, it is *sharanagati*. *Samarpan* is when you place some fruit before Bhagwan every

day as an offering. It is not that you think Bhagwan will eat the fruit – if you thought that, it is doubtful whether you would offer it every day!

Therefore, samarpan is what the person who offers up some object has in his heart. Bali did the samarpan of his *loka* (this world) – that became one *paada* (foot-length of Bhagwan's Vishnu's colossal form). He did the samarpan of his *paraloka* (the Swarga he would get as the fruit of his good deeds after he died) – that became the second pada. Bhagwan said, 'Your samarpan is not complete. You had promised me three foot-lengths. Your word is false! You are false!'

'Very well, Maharaj,' said Bali. 'Take my 'I' (the ego of individuality) as the third pada.' That was done. The samarpan was total.

So don't look at the words; look at your *bhaava* (feeling). How does it concern you whether someone else is sharanagata or not? How does it concern you whether someone is a prapanna? How does it affect you if someone is samarpita? Look at yourself – are you samarpita, are you a prapanna, or are you a sharanagata?

Our Mahatmas explained that humans have a *bhrama* (false belief) which is caused by a lack of shraddha. Lack of *vichaara* (profound thought) and lack of *anubhava* (experience) are also contributory factors. The bhram is that we think that our *jeevana* (life) of hands and feet is *svatantra* (independent; we are free to do whatever we want).

When we go up to a certain height we begin to float because the pull of gravity reduces. Your body is heavy on the level you are at. You become weightless when you reach a certain distance from the earth.

You cannot live without *mitti* (clay, earth). What is wheat? What are cereals? What are fruits? They are *mitti* and *paanee* (earth and water). You cannot live without water. Are you *svatantra*? You are *samarpita*!

You are *samarpita* to the *prithivee* (earth), *jala* (water), *ooshanaa* (heat), *praana* (life-giving breath), *vaayu* (air), *aakaasha* (space) and you are *samarpita* to the *samashti-che`tanaa* (universal consciousness).

This *parichhinna jeevana* (fragmented life) is actually *samarpita* to the Paramatma. Everything is in His hands. It is *sharanaagata* (protected by Him). It is *prapanna* (clinging to Him). We feel that we are independent because we don't understand things properly. It is a false belief to think that you can live without the earth, water, heat, air or space!

Similarly, it is a *bhram* to think, 'I am separate from the *poorna che`tanaa* (universal consciousness), my knowledge is limited, and so is my consciousness.' The *nivritti* (removal) of this false belief can be called *samarpan*, *prapatti* or *sharanagati*, depending on the personal interpretation of the word.

In Urdu, the word 'dasta' is used for the hand. It is also used for diarrhea! Thus, it is better not to get confused by the intricacies of words, and focus on the feeling. Concentrate on what it is that you wish to say and want to do. For whom are you doing

the *karma* (actions; work) and the *tyaaga* (giving up)? What is the purpose or objective of your efforts, your feelings, and your *se`vaa* (the service you render)?

If it is your purpose to become *aatmonmukha* (turn inwards, towards your Atma; the Brahman), it is a *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress). If it is for some worldly consideration, it is a *baadhaa* (obstacle) on your spiritual journey.

Therefore, samarpan means the offering up of an object. In our traditional marriage rites the father of the bride does the samarpan of his daughter to her husband. Samarpan of money is done for the poor and for Brahmins. Karma (an action; a ritual) is offered up to Bhagwan – *shrikrishnaarpanamastu*'. There is also *aatmaarpana* (offering up the Self) to Bhagwan. Rukmini told Shri Krishna, 'I have done the *arpana* (offering up) of my Atma to You.' This is samarpan.

Similarly, prapatti means, 'I have caught Your feet.' The upper portion of the foot is called the 'prapad'. A disciple catches his Guru's feet and says, 'I am your sharanagata.'

Thus, the meaning of these words depends on the feeling you have in your heart, not in the words themselves. Whatever meaning you fill the word with is what it becomes.

: 4 :

Question: The Gita says nothing noteworthy about Dhritarashtra; what is the reason for this?

Answer: Only the question asked by Dhritarashtra is mentioned in the Gita. Nothing is said about how he was affected after listening to Sanjay narrate the entire Gita. Dhritarashtra was blind. He was *agnaani* (lacking in Gnan). After narrating the Gita, Sanjay told him that victory would be where Shri Krishna is.

Tatra shreervijayobhootirdhruvaa neetirmatirmama.

(Gita 18. 78)

(Where Shri Krishna is, there is *shree* = Grace and prosperity, *vijaya* = victory, *vibhooti* = supremacy, *dhruva neeti* = eternal righteousness. This is my opinion.)

Dhritarashtra felt *dukhi* (unhappy) to hear that his sons would lose the war; how could he display any pleasure at hearing the Gita? He was dejected and pitiful. Sanjay expressed elation at hearing the Gita. Arjuna had come into the battlefield to obtain Gnan.

The meaning of this is that it is not that you will attain Gnan by sitting in a corner of your home or running away to a cave in the Himalaya. Gnan is gained by a person who is awake and purposeful. Nobody who is useless, idle, sleeping, or *tamogunee* (steeped in Tamo guna, the tendency that gives

dullness and delusion) is eligible for Gnan. If you want Gnan you have to come into the battlefield of life. You will face obstacles, difficulties, and setbacks. You will have to progress in spite of them, with courage.

Arjuna obtained Gnan on the battlefield. Neither was he in a state of Samadhi nor was he in a Himalayan cave, and nor was he sleeping in his house. The first point is that Arjuna does something after giving thought to whether it is appropriate to do this work or not. The quintessence of the first chapter is that you should not rush blindly into some work. You should give due consideration to all aspects first.

All the principal people had decided to go to war – Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, and Duryodhana on the enemy side, and Yudhishtira, Drishtadyumna, and Shri Krishna on this side. Then Arjuna said, ‘No; we should give some thought before starting the war.’ He ordered Shri Krishna –

Se`naylorubhayormadhye` ratham sthaapaya me`chyuta.

(Gita 1.21)

(Arjuna said to Shri Krishna, ‘Place my chariot in-between the two Armies, Achyuta.’)

‘You have taken on the role of the *saarathi* – the driver of my chariot. A sarathi is the servant and the *rathi* (Master of the chariot) is the boss. This is Your first test. The test of a sarathi is how well he does what the rathi tells him. If You obey me, You are a true sarathi. When I give You some command You should not think, “I am Krishna. I am older than Arjuna. I am the

Ishwara.” You should not question my authority when I tell you to do something.’

This is Shri Krishna’s greatness! Even Arjuna felt embarrassed to be giving orders to Shri Krishna. That is why he used the word ‘achyuta’ (achyuta means a person who does not fall from his position. It is one of Bhagwan’s names). The indication is, ‘You can do anything; any lowly or superior work. You can pick up the soiled plates of people who have finished eating at Yudhishtira’s Yagna. Your stature is never diminished. You can steal butter and the clothes of the gopis, but You never become the less for it. Nor do You become greater when You are seated on a magnificent throne and worshipped by great people, Achyuta, You remain established in Your *svaroopa* (essence; true form) under all circumstances.’

Shri Krishna’s swarup does not become superior or inferior because of anything He does.

E`sha nityo mahimaa braahmanasya na karmanaa vardhate` no kaneeyaan. (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4. 4. 23)

It is the *nitya mahimaa* (eternal greatness) of a *brahmagnaanee* (one who has obtained Gnan about the Brahman) that he becomes neither greater nor smaller due to anything he may or may not do. He is achyuta.

Shri Krishna is Narayana Himself, and Arjuna is an Avatar of Nara (a human being) who is Narayana’s eternal companion. Arjuna’s *mamataa* (protective love) for his people overcame him when he saw them arrayed for battle, ready to die. This mamata was for the people he was attached to.

Arjuna became small and made Bhagwan big for the *kalyaana* (salvation) of all people. And, Bhagwan made Arjuna His superior (as the rathi) by becoming a sarathi. Sometimes, He becomes great and sometimes He becomes small.

One point is to be noted here, particularly by the Grihastha (married householders) who listen to discussions on Vedanta. There are two *bandhana* (bondages) in this world – one is *mamataa* (the feeling of ‘mine’) – and the other is *ahamataa* (the feeling of ‘I’). Grihastha Vedantis are always tense because they are unwilling to give up their mamata; they want to give up only their ahamta.

That means, ‘My wealth, my people, my family, and my good name should all remain.’ If mamata is retained, how can the *aham* (I) – who has mamata for wealth etc – be erased? It is essential to give up the feeling of ‘mine’ before the feeling of ‘I’ can be given up. If I hold on to my handkerchief and expect to be free of the feeling that it is I who is holding it, it is not possible.

The first point that came into Arjuna’s mind was, ‘These are my people.’ Where equanimity of outlook should have been present, mamata rose up in Arjuna’s heart. He named the people arrayed before him saying, ‘He is my relative, he is my associate, he is my elder; how can I let them be killed in the war?’

Arjuna’s affection for these people became a weakness. ‘I don’t want the Kingdom,’ he said. ‘I don’t want *bhoga* (worldly pleasures) or sukha. I want the relatives and friends I love.’ This

is *mamatva* (partiality for what is 'mine'). The difference between Duryodhana and Arjuna becomes apparent here. Duryodhana tells Dronacharya,

'Madarthe` tyaktajeevitah`

(Gita 1.9).

'All the people gathered here are ready to give up their lives to make me the Raja.' This is Duryodhan's attitude.

Arjuna says,

Ye`shaamarthe` kaankshitam no raajyam bhogaah sukhaani cha,

te` eeme`vasthita yuddhe` praanaanstyaktvaa dhanaani cha.

(Gita 1. 33)

'Those for whom I wanted the Kingdom, bhoga, and sukha stand before me, prepared to give up life and wealth. Who will I live for, if they die? I don't want the Kingdom at the cost of their death. I will not fight in such a war.' This is the thought that rose in Arjuna's mind. Furthermore, thoughts about Dharma and *paraloka* (Swarga obtained after death) also arose in Arjuna's mind.

Dharme` nashte` kulam kritsnamadharmobhibhavatyuta.

(1.40)

'When these men die in battle, their wives will become widows. The *kula-dharma* (Dharma of the lineage) will be destroyed.

And, *ashuchau narake` patanti pitrah* – the proper rituals for ancestors won't be done; the departed will go to Narak (Hell).'

Thus, whenever a human being wants to do something he should first give proper thought to the consequences of his actions. Arjuna does not hide his thoughts. He expresses them clearly. He told Shri Krishna what was in his heart. A *jignaasu* (one who wants to know) should be straightforward and honest. All the love in Arjuna's heart is with Shri Krishna. You will remember that Arjuna was asked to choose between the powerful Army of the huge Army of the Yadava rulers, and an unarmed Shri Krishna who would not fight in the Mahabharata war.

It is a kind of *dosha* (fault; offence) if you have *pre`ma* (love) for someone, and serve another. *Preeti* (love) and *se`vaa* (service) go together. There should be *vishvaasa* (confidence; faith), *prema*, and *seva*. It is natural to have *prema* for someone you trust. Service rendered to a loved one comes naturally. *Seva* means an action that gives *sukha* to the one you wish to serve.

Arjuna felt afraid, and he became '*shokasanvignamaanasah*' – his heart was filled with sorrow. He took the *sharana* (refuge) of Shri Krishna.

This is another point for you to think about. If you have some *duvidhaa* (perplexity; dilemma) do you go to a person on whom you have confidence and who is knowledgeable, or do you go to some other person? If you are uncertain about what the right things to do is, you should ask a competent, trustworthy person to advise you. Why don't you speak openly and tell him

about your dilemma? What purpose will it serve if you hide your problem?

The treatment for mental confusion can be given if you open up to a well-wisher who is wise and worthy of your confidence. It is possible to get a satisfactory answer, and also its treatment. However, what will happen if you don't reveal the state of your mind to a person who can give you the right guidance?

Arjuna opened his heart to Shri Krishna at the start of the second chapter of the Gita.

Shishyaste`ham shaadhi maam tvaam prapannam.

(2. 7)

(I am Your disciple. I take refuge in You. Please instruct me.)

Our elders have said that if you are troubled by any *samasyaa* (problem; dilemma) you should chant this shloka eight times when you go to bed. Keep the Gita beside your pillow or on your chest, and go to sleep. Gita Bhagavati (goddess) will give you the answer in a day or two, or within a week. She will tell your heart what you should do.

It is a strange fact that people believe that in interaction it is the *shishya* (disciple) who is given orders and teaching, by the Guru. The meaning of 'shishya' is different in Sanskrit. In Sanskrit, shishya means one who is eligible for *saashana* (ruling) – *shaasitum योग्यः शिष्यः*. A shishya is one who the Guru can punish if he does not go on the straight path. The Guru has the right to catch the disciple's ear, scold him or punish him; even beat him. A shishya does not mean just a

disciple who does *mantra-jaapa* (routine chanting of a group of words, given by his Guru; words that have the power to evoke subtle effects), or listen to a *vyaakhyaana* (discourse). People who don't know Sanskrit will not understand this. Shishya means a person who has the requisite qualities for being instructed by a Guru.

There is a child in Delhi. He is four years old. He is extremely intelligent and extremely naughty. If his grandfather tells him, 'My child, what you have done is wrong,' he accepts it. 'Catch your ears!' The boy catches his ears. 'Stand up!' The boy stands up. 'Stand there holding your ears, till I tell you to relax.' The boy's grandfather told me that one day the boy stood, holding his ears, for forty minutes! He is a four-year old shishya!

If you want to decide for yourself, using your own learning and intelligence and wishes, you will never get the qualities of a shishya. If you wish, I can start talking about the *ghataakaasha-mathaakaahsa* (the space in the pot; the human body – the space within the building), but you have to build up the flight of stairs that enables you to reach a level where you can understand what is the *antahkaranaavachhinna chaitanya* (the consciousness that is not separate from the consciousness of the fourfold mind or subtle body), and what is the *vishayaavachhinna chaitanya* (the consciousness that makes you identify with the objects of the senses).

You obtain Gnan about the sense objects only when your own consciousness becomes one with them. Gnan is obtained only when the *guru-avachhinna-chaitanya* (the consciousness that is

not separate in the Guru) and the *shishya-avachhinna-chaitanya* (the consciousness that is not separate in the Guru) become one. Until then, there is no Guru and no shishya. The buddhi of both should have the same understanding. Just as the eyes of the lover and the beloved have a common focus, the Guru and shishya have the same outlook.

Shishyaste`ham shaadhi maam.

Arjuna said, ‘Please instruct me, because I am Your *prapanna* (protected by You).’

Prapanna means, ‘I catch your feet and want to be instructed by you.’

This sentence was quite conclusive. Krishna could have said, ‘Very well, since you are prepared to listen to Me and accept My teaching, I tell you to pick up your bow and quiver of arrows, and kill your enemies.’ The matter would have ended there. However, Arjuna added a clause. He said, ‘I will obey You in everything else, but I will not fight.’

Na yotsye`.

(2. 9)

What kind of a disciple is this, who says he is willing to obey all other commands, except one; that he will not fight? This disciple of Shri Krishna says that he will accept everything Shri Krishna says about Dharma, Gnan, the Brahman, and *sadaachaara* (right behavior and lifestyle), but he won’t accept Shri Krishna’s instructions on *raja-neeti* (the right way of ruling)? It is tantamount to saying, ‘I understand the intricacies

of ruling a kingdom better than You. You know the *dharma-neeti* (the right way of doing Dharma) and *gnaana-neeti* (the right understanding of spiritual matters, and You know the *svaroop*a (essence; true form) of the Brahman. However, this is a matter of *grihasthee* (family matters) which I know better than You.'

Shri Krishna thought, 'Arjuna's attachments must be exposed first. Every *duraagraha* (wrong urge) of his has a remedy. There is nothing in this *sansaara* (interactive world) that is *tyaajya* (to be rejected) or *graahya* (to be accepted); nothing is *sat* (pure existence; the ultimate truth) and nothing is *asat* (false; a relative truth) – '*sadasad chaahamarjuna (9. 19).*' It is the Paramatma who is seen as both the Sat and the asat, but the hidden agenda in the heart is the cause of dukha.

Shri Krishna said, 'My brother, don't show Me how clever you are – know yourself first!' The main point is that unless a person has Atmagnan (Gnan about the Atma), he cannot even understand what his Dharma is, what the right thing for him to do is.

If you don't know that you are the wife, you can never come to the right conclusion about your duty to your husband. How can a man decide about his duty to his parents unless he knows that he is their son? *Aatma-bodha* (knowledge about the Atma; the Self) is essential for you to decide where your duty lies.

If I am a Brahmin, it is my *kartavya* (duty) to do the daily ritual of the Sandhya Vandan, *japa* (ritual chanting) of the Gayatri Mantra, and Agnihotra (offering oblations into the sacred fire).

If I am a Kshatriya (warrior class) it is my duty to protect my people, employ and feed them. Thus, the *bhaarateeya parampara* (Indian tradition) is to first establish the *aatma-bhaava* (feeling of one's birth and social status). Rituals like the *yagnopaveeta* (receiving the sacred thread) establish and explain the duties of a person.

A person has to become a Sanyasi (Monk) before he is faced with the kartavya of a Sanyasi. Only then does he follow the rules of what a Sanyasi should do and what he should not do. It is not that a person can start doing whatever he feels like and stop when he wants!

Therefore, Bhagwan decided that Arjuna should obtain Atmagnan first. Then he will understand that to fight or not fight are the same, but it is his primary duty as a warrior, to undertake the action of fighting in a war that has been started with his knowledge and consent. That is why He gave Arjuna the *upade'sha* (teaching) of Atmagnan.

Atmagnan has wonderful points that are the quintessence of the mysteries of *bhagvad-gnaana* (Gnan about Bhagwan). There are the characteristics of a *sthitapragnya* (an enlightened person who never loses his mental balance). It is a test of *aatma-saakshaatkaara* (a direct personal experience of the Atma that is not separate from the non-dual Brahman which is the substratum of all that exists).

The entire second chapter of the Gita is the foundation, the *sootra* (origin) of the entire Gita. In it you can find Vedanta. The first thing you should see is that in this it is necessary to have

sahishnuta (the ability to endure). One who has *titiksha* (enduring without getting agitated) is *sahishnu* (tolerant; forbearing).

*Maatraasparshaastu kaunte`ya sheetoshnasukhadukhadaah,
aagamaapaayinonityaastaantitikshava bhaarata.*

(2. 14)

(O Son of Kunti, the senses that experience dualities like cold-heat, sukha-dukha etc, and indulge in worldly gratifications are subject to being created and destroyed. They are transient. Therefore, endure them with equanimity.)

The basis of a *sthitapragna* (an enlightened person who remains tranquil under all circumstances) is:

*Yam hi na vyathayantye`te` purusham prusharshabha,
samadukhasukham dheeram somritatvaaya kalpate`.*

(2. 15)

(O most superior of men, the steadfast person who sees dukha-sukha with equal dispassion is not troubled by the reactions of the senses. Such a person is eligible for Moksha; he will be liberated from the cycle of rebirth.)

The words '*taantitikshasva*' (endure them) and '*dheeram*' (steadfast) used here indicate the *sthitapragna*. We should be *dheer*.

What does the word '*dheera*' mean, in the Sanskrit language?

One grammatical break up of 'dheer' is, *dhatte`iti dheerah* – a person who can control his *mana* (emotional mind) and *indriya* (five sense organs and five organs of action) is called dheer. He is not to destroy them; they are to be used as directed by the higher intellect. They should not be like a car that has no brakes.

'Brake' means, *vaaraka* – the one who controls. What kind of a life is it, if a person picks up and eats whatever he feels like, touches whatever he is tempted to, and says things unthinkingly? This is not the way to live! Even animals are better than such people, because they have their own rules and code of conduct. Dogs have *maryaadaa* (ethical framework) in their life. Cows and bulls have *maryada* in their lives. Even a lion will follow the rules of his tribe. Therefore, if a more human being – who is more evolved than other species – does not behave with decorum, he is worse than an animal! Therefore, *'dhatte`iti dheerah.'*

And, *'dhiyam eerati pre`rayati iti dheerah'* – a person who inspires his *buddhi* (intellect) is dheer. He uses his intellect for good purposes. The great poet Kalidas has defined the word dheer –

Vikaarahe`tau sati vikriyante` ye`sham na che`taansi ta e`va dheerah (Kumar Sambhav 1. 59)

A *dheera purusha* (steadfast person) is one whose mind remains unaffected by the various factors that create *vikaara* (mental distortions like lust, greed, fear, anger etc). Samarth Ramdas had a *shishya* (disciple) who faced the fear of *mrityu*

(death). He did not have *aatmagnaana* (Gnan about the Atma). He was pressing his Guru's feet when he saw mrityu coming for him. He quickly hid his head under the blanket that covered his Guru's feet. The emissaries of Yama Raj (the presiding deity of death) went back empty handed.

So, you see, if the causes of dukha come into your life, you should turn inwards into your *hridaya* (heart)

The second point is, '*titikshasva*'. Endure calmly whatever happens. Life keeps bringing good-bad, favorable-unfavorable, things you like-things you dislike. If you get frightened by any of them – if you lack steadfastness and endurance – you will not be able to progress in life. People will say hurtful things and you will keep getting irritated.

There was a Thakur Saheb who lived close to our village. He was very learned. Once he had to give testimony at Court. The lawyer tried his best to shake his testimony during cross-examination, but was unable to do so. Then he asked Thakur Saheb, 'Have you received elementary education or not?' This angered Thakur Saheb. 'I have enough education to teach you for ten years!' he said.

The lawyer at once told the Judge, 'Your Honor, let this statement be noted. I will not cross-examine this learned witness anymore, because I will never succeed in getting information from him. He is using his knowledge and not being honest.'

Thus, a person should have the habit of endurance. One lawyer was arguing in Court. The opposition lawyer said something

that angered him. He stopped speaking. 'Why have you stopped speaking?' asked the Judge. He did not answer. Five minutes passed. Then he said, 'My Guruji has told me that I should remain silent for five minutes if my mind gets agitated. I was obeying his command.' The man's anger had cooled during those five minutes. He did not utter the hasty words that had risen in his mind.

The Gita says,

Maatraasparshaastu kaunte`ya sheetoshnasukhadukhadaah.

(2. 14)

(O son of Kunti, cold-heat, and sukha-dukha etc are all transient. Ignore them.)

People who endure cold weather cannot endure the hot weather, and those who endure the heat cannot endure the cold. This is a dilemma. There was a Mahatma who lived in the intense cold of Gangotri for twenty-five years. His name was Krishnaramji. He was invited to lay the foundation stone of the Hindi University at Haridwar, and he came down in the month of December. He began to perspire. People fanned him to make him comfortable. He kept saying, 'This heat is intolerable!' Other people were shivering in the cold, trying to sit close to braziers!

I, for one, am used to a warmer climate. If you make me sit in an icy place I will freeze! A person should be able to endure both the heat and the cold climate. Just as you buy a watch that is waterproof and shockproof, mould yourself in such a way

that you retain your equilibrium – *Taantitkshasva bhaarata. (2. 14)*’

What will this achieve? Your *pragnaa* (the intellect that reaches the right understanding) will become *sthita*. ‘Sthita’ means stable; unwavering. It is not proper to shift and change with the petty incidents that occur so frequently. A person’s thinking should be steady and balanced. When you are steadfast in your attitude, you win the respect of people. If your thinking is fickle, no one will respect your words. They will always expect you to retract.

Therefore, be *pratishthita* (established in a position of respect). It is essential that the *buddhi* (intellect) is steadfast, if you want to be considered trustworthy and respected. ‘*Tasya pragnaa pratishthita (Gita 2. 61)*’. The intellect of a person who can control his senses is steadfast. This is the practical viewpoint.

If you do bhakti, and give thought to Vedanta, but your buddhi is not steadfast – if it is fickle – what will be the state of your life?

There was a young maiden who was eligible for marriage. She would go to the main gate of a boys’ college every day and watch the young men as they came out. ‘Will this boy be suitable for me or will that boy be better?’ she would think. The state of your buddhi will be like that girl. Your life will pass in indecision. Therefore, a person should be firmly established in what he decides is right and proper for him. He should have pratishtha.

How is pratishtha obtained?

The first point is that you should not give priority to worldly objects.

*Naasato vidyate` bhaava naabhaavo vidyate` satah,
ubhayorapi drishtontastvanayostattvadarshibhih.*

(2. 16)

(The *asat* has no *sattaa*, meaning, the transient has no eternal existence; and that, which is eternal is never destroyed. Enlightened people have seen the essence of both.)

Enlightened sages have confirmed the principle, '*naasato vidyate` bhaavo`*'. The son of a barren woman is not born; nor does he die, because he is non-existent. That which does not exist, does not exist! And, '*naabhaavo vidyate` satah`*' – that, which exists, cannot be non-existent.

Who 'is'? What 'is not'? It is the constantly changing interactive world. It has no permanent existence. And, the one who sees this world of continuous change is the Atma that always exists. It is never no-existent. *Abhaava* (absence; non-existence) means, without *bhaava* (bhava can mean existence; it can also mean a feeling).

The Atma has neither birth nor death; nor has the *prapancha* (interactive world). The blueness of the sky has no birth or death either; nor does the one who sees the blueness. This is final. This decision is conclusive. What is, is.

The scenes of this world come and go. All the scenes are pictures. There was a gentleman who kept a picture of Shri

Krishna when he did *bhajana* (sang devotional songs). When he came across a better picture of Shri Krishna he would buy it and replace the earlier picture. Bhagwan's picture is meant to be implanted in the heart, to help us focus on Him. We should connect our 'mine' to Bhagwan if we want to detach ourselves from worldly objects. We should not think, 'My wife, my son, my wealth, my house, my good name,' etc. We should think, 'my Bhagwan.'

Me`re` to giridhara gopaala doosaro na koyee.

(Only Giridhar Gopal is mine; I have no other.)

So, when your 'mine' becomes attached to Bhagwan worldly attachments are weakened automatically. This is a sublime method for *antahkarana shuddha* (purifying the emotional mind).

Now, see another point: it is *agnaana* (ignorance; lack of Gnan) to consider yourself to be a *kartaa* (doer of the action) and *bhoktaa* (the one who has pleasant and unpleasant experiences). The Gita tells us:

*Ya e`nam ve`tti hantaaram yashchainam manyate` hatam,
ubhau tau na vijaaneeto naayam hanta na hanyate`.*

(2. 19)

(A person who thinks that the Atma is subject to death, and the person who considers it to have died, are both ignorant of the truth. This Atma neither kills nor is killed.)

Who is an *agnaanee* (ignorant person)? It is a person who believes that it is he who does the good and bad deeds, and has the pleasant and unpleasant experiences. That means, his agnan makes him believe that he is the karta and the bhokta.

And, what does Gnan achieve?

Ve`daavinaashinam nityam ya e`namajavyayayam.

(2. 21)

(A person who knows that this Atma is not subject to destruction knows that it is eternal, unborn, and not subject to deterioration.)

Gnan makes a person aware that he is *nitya-shuddha-buddha-mukta* (eternal-pure-enlightened-free) *chinmaatra* (pure consciousness) that is the Atma. Thus, agnan causes bondage and Gnan liberates. The prapanch is not Satya (eternal existence); the Atma is Satya.

Most people are caught in the maze of *kaamanaa* (desires) – let them take a great leap, from *jeevana-mukti* (being liberated from the identification with the body) up to Tattvagnan (Gnan about the essence of the Atma that is not separate from the non-dual Brahman, the substratum of all that exists). Actions prompted by desire become a cause of sorrow. It is not wrong to touch someone, but it is wrong to touch someone you have no right to touch, to gratify a sensual desire. It is not wrong to look at someone, but it is wrong to look with lust to any woman apart from your wife. Furthermore, there is no place at all for

hypocrisy. The important factor is *eemaandaaree* (honesty; being honorable). Are you honest or not?

Regarding the *sthitapragna* (a person established in right thinking), what is the *baadhaa* (obstacle) in being a *sthitapragna*? One obstacle is the unwillingness to endure hardship in carrying out your Dharma. Carrying out one's Dharma entails conflict, so people leave Dharma.

Dharmyaddhi yuddhaat shre`yonyat kshatriyasya na vidyate`.

(2. 31)

(A Kshatriya has no higher duty that leads to great good fortune than to fight for Dharma.)

'I am not interested in *shre`ya-pre`ya* (what is beneficial – what is pleasant). I cannot undertake the hardship of war'. The path of Paramartha (the supreme goal) is not for such lazy people! This is *sacchidaanandaghana* – it is the treasure of the Brahman. (Sat= pure existence, Chit = pure consciousness, Anand = pure joy, Ghana = filled with.)

A predominance of Sat creates the *kaarana* (cause), a predominance of Chit creates the Gnan, and a predominance of *preeti* (love) creates Anand. Therefore, you should have preeti as well as Gnan, and you should also have *sadaachaara* (proper behavior; the right kind of lifestyle) in your life. Sadachar comes from a predominance of Sat, Gnan from a predominance of the *buddhi* (intellect), and anand from a predominance of preeti. *Pre`ma* (pure love) will give happiness, the intellect will give the

right knowledge, and the right behavior will strengthen your *nishthaa* (faith). So, destroy worldly desires.

Buddhau sharanamanvichha kripanaa falahe`tavah.

(2. 49)

(Take refuge in Buddhi Yoga – attach your intellect to Bhagwan, because those who want the fruits of their deeds are pitiable.)

Be *samajhdaara* (have the right understanding). The predominance of *jadataa* (being like insensate matter; lacking awareness) results in the *kaarana* (cause), and when a little *che`tana* (consciousness; awareness) comes into it a person becomes the *kartaa* (doer of the action). When buddhi comes into the *kaarana* (the gross body that is used for the actions) he becomes the *gnaataa* (the one who knows).

The triad of the *gnaataa* (knower), *gnaana* (knowledge), and *gne`ya* (that, which is known), forms one group. Then there is the triad of the *bhoktaa* (the one who experiences), *bhoga* (the experience) and *bhogya* (that, which is experienced). The third triad, of the *kartaa* (doer), *bhoktaa* (the one who experiences) and *gnaataa* (knower) comes from the predominance of the *chaitanya* (universal consciousness) and *che`tana* (awareness; consciousness), which are one. That is the *saakshaata* (incarnate) Paramatma.

Come, my brother, let us get a *darshan* (see a revered object)! Don't think that this is impossible. People do get a darshan of the Paramatma. They do get His *saakshaatkaara* (direct personal experience). They meet Him and talk to Him.

When will this buddhi become *sthira* (settled; unwavering)? It is written that you will be free of *paapa-punya* (sin-spiritual merit) when your buddhi becomes settled.

Bhuddiyokto jahaateeha ubhe` sukritadushkrite` .

(2. 50)

(A person who has attained equanimity of the intellect becomes free of both paapa and punya.)

‘I can give you a wisdom by which you never get paapa and go to Narak (Hell), nor will you get punya and go to Swarga (Heaven). You can become free of both by using this buddhi.’

Shri Krishna also says, ‘I will give you a buddhi by which you do not feel sukha-dukha.

Karmajam buddhiyuktaa hi falam tyaktvaa maneeshinah.

(2. 51)

(People who have Gnan, and whose buddhi is balanced, are freed from the fruits of their deeds.)

What is the *karmajam falam* – the fruit of the action? It is sukha and dukha. ‘I have a buddhi that can free you from sin and spiritual merit. It is a buddhi that can make you free from desire.’

Yadaa te` mohakalilam buddhirvyatitarishyati.

(2. 52)

(When your buddhi crosses over the quicksand of deluded thinking.)

How can I get this buddhi? How can I recognize it?

The way to recognize it is that your buddhi becomes as is described by Shri Krishna. Only then will you recognize it.

What is it that you want? Take it, because that, which you desire, is already with you.

I will tell you something about *tarka-vitarka* (argument-counter argument). You want sukha (happiness and contentment), don't you? Your wish is, 'I should not get *dukha* (sorrow; suffering); I want to get sukha.'

Now, for what duration do you want sukha? You want it all the time, always. Is it not so? You want that you should always have sukha.

Very well; in which places do you want to have sukha? You want sukha that is everywhere. You want sukha that is always with you, wherever you are. Now, from whom do you want sukha? You want it from your mother and father, husband or wife, and from your friend. You want sukha from everybody. May you get it, by Bhagwan's Grace.

Thus, you want a sukha that is everywhere, at all times, in all people. How much effort do you want to put in to obtain sukha? You will say that you would prefer to get the sukha without having to make any effort at all!

Who are you willing to be enslaved to, for this sukha?

‘No, Maharaj, I don’t want to become a slave to anyone! I just want to get sukha, and be independent.’

There should be no dependency, no effort, and the sukha should be everywhere, all the time, and from everyone.

Now, should you be aware of the sukha or not?

Of course you want to be aware of the sukha!

Which is that sukha? This sukha cannot be obtained by getting married. Certainly there is sukha in a happily married life, and there is sukha in serving your parents, but you will get the sukha you seek only if you, yourself, are that sukha.

Please note this point. It is only you who will always be present wherever you are, whoever you meet, and have with yourself without having to make the least effort. You are always with yourself without being dependent or enslaved. You are aware of yourself. Wherever you are, you exist. Whenever you are, you exist. You make no effort, you exist independent of others, and you know that you exist.

So, my brother, what is it that you want? You want your Self. It is like a musk deer that runs around in the forest looking for *kastoori* (musk), not knowing that the fragrance comes from itself. Similarly, what you truly desire is your own Self, but you look for it in others. You can find sukha in other people, places or objects for a while, but it will be temporary. It will not be you; it will be some other. What he wants will be different from what you want. You will have to endure considerable discomfort when you are dependent on others.

So then, that which you actually want is your own Self.

Yadaa te` mohakalilam buddhirvyatitarishyati,

tadaa gantaasi nirve`dam shrotavyasya shrutasya cha.

(2. 52)

(When your buddhi crosses over the quagmire of *moha* – when you have overcome deluded thinking – you will feel no attraction for anything in this world or Swarga.)

You are caught in the quicksand of *moha*. You will not get *sukha* from any of the sources you hope to get it from. This is a *shaapa* (curse). The Upanishad says: *Priyam rotsyati'* (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1. 4. 8*). If you love the objects of this world, they will make you weep. As long as they don't know that you love them, they will talk lovingly, but as soon as they realize that you have a weakness for them they will start harassing you to see whether you do, indeed love them.

I have wept so many times, my brother! My hair has not turned white because of sitting in the sun! I have also loved people and I have also wept because of them. These are life's experiences, and if you pay attention to them you will cross over the slime of *moha*. Your *mana* (emotional mind) and buddhi will be stable. *Sthirataa* (stability; steadfastness) is not to be dismissed as something ordinary, of little importance.

A Sindhi came to Vrindavan when Pakistan was formed. He often came to meet me. Once I asked how things were with him. 'Maharaj,' he said, 'I have managed to bring away the bulk of my wealth with me.'

‘If you have the means, you should start some business,’ I told him.

‘I am considering all the possibilities, Maharaj,’ he replied. ‘I may go into construction, or open a shop.’ Thirty years passed but his buddhi did not settle on what he would do. All his capital was used up. A year or two ago I heard that he has passed away.

You should have the power to decide what you should do. A quick decision has to be taken at times. ‘Should I turn right here or should I go left?’ And, you should have the capacity to endure the discomforts that come.

*Shrutivipratipannaa te` yadaa sthaasyati nishchala,
samaadhaavachalaa buddhistadaa yogamavaapsyasi.*

(2. 53)

(Your mind is confused with the various things you have heard. When it settles firmly on the Paramatma you will attain Yoga – meaning, you will always be attached to Him.)

Hearing this, Arjuna asked Shri Krishna how he could recognize this state. Shri Krishna told him, ‘Why should you need to recognize this state in anyone else? Become a *sthitapragna* (one whose thinking is always established and stable, in the Paramatma.)’

Pragnaa means the correct understanding, and *sthita* means firmly established. This is the *svaroopa* (essence; true form) of

Satya, and if the Satya is separate from our Atma it will become a-satya (false).

If the Satya becomes separated from your Atma you will have to do *saadhana* (use a method; make an effort for spiritual progress), but it is always with you if it is not separated.

‘If the Atma is some other, our mana will not always match it. Sometimes it will cause us sorrow. Being separate from the Atma it will be *jada* (insensate matter). You will have no perception of it when you sleep. Therefore, you should become a sthitapragna. Why do you look for another person who is a sthitapragna?’

If someone were to ask me, ‘Maharaj, please show me a sthitapragna,’ what would I say? I would say, ‘My brother, I don’t know about other people, but my disciples suspect me of being a sthitapragna.’ How can we know about the mental condition of other people? Even my disciples don’t really know; they believe me to be one. You should become a sthitapragna yourself.

The answer Shri Krishna gave to Arjuna has six points.

- 1) *Aatmatushti* – to be content within yourself.
- 2) *Anudve`ga* – to remain tranquil.
- 3) *Samataa* – to retain mental equilibrium.
- 4) *Samaadhi* – to be in a state of deep meditation.
- 5) *Indreeyavashee* – to be in control of the sense organs.
- 6) *Veetaraaga, veetabhaya, veetakrodha* – to rise above attachments, fear, and anger.

Are you satisfied within yourself, with yourself, or not?

One person asked, 'Is the Ishwara *prasanna* (pleased) with me or not?'

Maharaj replied, 'Are you *prasanna* with yourself or not? If you do not feel satisfied with your work, business, going here and there, with your wife, son, health, state of mind, and your intellect, how will the Ishwara be pleased with you? Be pleased with yourself first, that your body and mind and intellect are healthy.'

You become infatuated with a puppet made of flesh and bones and skin, and then talk about being *prasanna*! A person who is happy to get the jada will become jada. A person who is happy to get a *praanee* (being with consciousness) will become a prani; and a person who is happy when he gets the Ishwara will become the Ishwara. A person who is pleased to get his Self will become the Brahman.

You see, *santosha* (satisfaction; contentment) is in one's self. Why does your buddhi waver?

'No, my brother, I am happy with myself but other people come and cause agitation. My neighbor said this, and my wife did this, etc.'

I know about the dukha in the homes of Grihastha (married householders). The wives go shopping on their own, daughters don't want the parents to choose husbands for them, and sons come home late at night. These are the dilemmas of families. They are always facing perplexities. This is called *udve`ga*

(agitation). There is a rising of emotion that is like the rising of bile.

Therefore, if you want your buddhi to be steadfast you need *aatmatushti* (being content within yourself) and you need *anudve`ga* (tranquility). The people you meet should be good people, and you should avoid people with the wrong tendencies. '*Naabhinandati na dve`shti* (2. 57) – neither praise not criticize.' And you should withdraw yourself from worldly attachments the way a tortoise withdraws its limbs.

*Yadaa samharate` chaayam koormongaaneeva sarvashah,
indriyaaneendriyaarthe`bhyastasya pragnaa pratishtithaa.*

(2. 58)

(A person's buddhi becomes stable when he withdraws his senses from worldly objects the way a tortoise withdraws its limbs.)

The fifth point is that there should be no *raaga* (emotional attachments that become a weakness).

*Vishayaa vinivartante` niraahaarasya de`hinah,
rasavarja rasopyasya param drishtvaa nivartate`.*

(2. 59)

(When a person restrains his senses he succeeds in abstaining from sensual indulgences. However, it does not remove his attraction for them. The strong worldly attachments of a

sthitapragna are removed automatically when he gets a direct personal experience of the Paramatma.)

You can stay hungry. There was a gentleman in Vrindavan who abstained from eating any *anna* (cereals or lentils) for a year. He would drink *charanaamrita* (the water with which the feet of Bhagwan's image have been washed). He also kept *mauna* (a vow of silence). He had great endurance. He endured intense heat and intense cold weather. When eleven months of this asceticism passed he started to sit with his disciples to decide how the fast and the mauna should be broken. Which food should he partake of first, and what word should be the first he spoke? Should he say, 'Ganeshaya namah' or 'Narayana', or 'Rama-Rama'? Meetings were held to decide these points.

So you see, there is raaga in speaking and raaga in eating. The best word should be spoken first and the best food should be eaten first. The disciples argued amongst themselves. Ultimately, the man would have to decide what he wanted to say and eat, is it not?

Thus, it is possible for you to give up eating for not just one, but even ten years. I know of a lady who had not eaten for fifty years. I know of other people who maintained mauna for fifty years. You will think that they must be great Mahatmas. No. Mauna is not an indication of a person being great. Nor can a Mahatma's greatness be gauged by his giving up food. The only indication you can get is whether he has raaga or not.

Vishayaa vinivartante` nirahaarasya de`hinah.

If you stop eating some food, or tie a cloth over your eyes, you will not actually give up eating or seeing things. To see with the eyes is also an *aahaara* (intake; imbuing). Intake can be done through the ears, by listening, and through the senses of the touch, or the nose.

There is a lady who lives thirty miles from Jodhpur. I know that she has not eaten for the past fifty years. Her feet have the *shakti* (power; capacity) to absorb energy by placing the soles of her feet on the ground. You will be amazed to hear this. Shri Jaydayalji Goendka, the founder of the Gita Press, and Swami Sharananandaji tested her by keeping her in a locked room. She drinks water – she takes charanamrita. She keeps her feet on the ground. She does not wear slippers, and does not put her feet on the bed. The soles of her feet always touch the ground. Just as trees draw water from the earth, and carry it up to the highest branch and leaf, her body has the same capacity. Some people can stay without eating, but they can't stay without seeing somebody. Their eyes demand to see the one they love.

Pyaare` tihaare` binaa akhiyaan dukhiyaa nahi maanati hein.

(My Beloved, my eyes are unhappy when they don't see You.'

I see people find excuses to touch someone, or talk sweetly with them. This is food for the skin and tongue. In Hindi, this is called 'batarasa'.

Batarasa laalacha laalakee muralee dharee lukaaya.

(I have hidden Your flute with the hope that You will talk to me.)

The gopis hid Shri Krishna's flute, hoping He would talk to them instead of playing the flute.

Saunha kare` bhaunhana hanse` de`na kahe` nata jaaya.

The gopis found ways to interact with their Beloved. They found food with their eyes, and food with their nose. You can give up food, but you can't give up the emotional attachment in your heart. The memory of things you like will linger, and they will continue to tempt you.

The buddhi will not be sthira.

Therefore, it is essential to give up desire if you want your buddhi to be steadfast and unwavering. '*Prajahaati yadaa kaamaan (2. 55)*' – give up wanting anything at all. That is the first step.

The second step is *aatmatushti* – being content within yourself.

The third step is *anudve`ga* – not letting yourself get agitated.

The fourth step is *samataa* – having equanimity under all circumstances.

The fifth step is *sanyama* – maintaining self-restraint; not being carried away.

The sixth step is removing raaga – having no strong attachments that can sway your thinking or inner stability.

These six steps are the first requisite for a sthira buddhi.

Taani sarvaani sanyamya yukta aaseeta matparah,

vashe` hi yasye`ndriyaani tasya pragnaa pratishthitaa.

(2. 61)

(A spiritual aspirant should have control over all his sense organs and organs of action, and sit for meditation with a calm mind, because the buddhi is sthira when the senses are controlled.)

Some people have a habit of shaking their leg when they sit on a chair. This shows an inner restlessness. Sometimes people develop a habit like twirling a button on their shirt. If something prevents them from fiddling, they are unable to continue smoothly with the lecture they are giving, because their thinking is affected by the interruption of a habit. So, just think of how careful you have to be about keeping your buddhi free of any trammels.

You may say you have no need to keep your buddhi controlled. Remember you won't be able to work in a steadfast manner if you can't control your buddhi. My brother, you may face loss or gain, but use your buddhi to continue working. Go ahead with your life. However, there must be stability in your mind about what is the right thing for you.

People cannot read the Shastras (ancient books on religion), they can't do business, and they can't win the trust of people if their buddhi is wavering. No customer will trust you if your buddhi is not steadfast. Your suppliers won't trust your word; they will be hesitant to accept your order. Therefore, our buddhi needs to be stable and dependable; there should be no

fickleness and wavering once a decision is taken. The Gita explains this for you.

: 5 :

Question: Respected Maharajshri, is there any conflict between Bhakti and Vedanta? If a *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) listens to discourses on Vedanta, gives thought to the principle of Vedanta, and also does *upaasanaa* (loving worship), can he attain both Gnan and Bhakti?

Maharajshri, I do the *poojaa* (ritual worship) of Bhagwan's image. Some people tell me that this will not achieve anything. I will be uplifted only by doing what my Guru tells me I should do. Please give me some enlightenment on this matter, so I can develop love for Bhagwan's lotus feet.

Answer: My brother, Bhakti and Vedanta do not oppose anyone – how will there be a conflict between them? Bhagwan's bhakti is done to remove the *virodha* (opposition to something; hostility) that is in the heart. A bhakta prays, 'Please let me not have enmity for anyone. Bhagwan is present in all. Let me have goodwill for all.' Vedanta is studied to understand that everything is the Atma, everything is in the Atma, and the Atma is the non-dual Brahman.

That which has virodh is not the *paramaarth*a (supreme goal). If Bhagwan is in all, there is no virodh, and if everything is the Atma, there is no virodh either. There is no virodh if everything is not in the Atma; nothing exists, but the Atma.

Now consider one point. You are a *grihastha* (married householder). The wife loves her husband and the husband

loves the wife. Now, should they do bhakti or not? Will the husband and wife wait to do Bhagwan's bhakti till they stop loving each other? Are they to wait till their love fades, to obtain the Gnan of Vedanta? One should never think on these lines.

People have so much bhakti for this body made of bones, flesh and skin! They become a *bhanghi* (remover of the night soil) in the morning. They pour water on the body to wash it thoroughly – they become a *dhobi* (washer-man). They become a barber for their body. We have to become everything for our body. None of this is an obstacle for bhakti or Vedanta. That, which we believe to be Bhagwan, the form we love as Bhagwan, is a *svaroopa* (essence; form) of Bhagwan. How can there be any virodh in having bhakti and doing puja?

You consider diamonds, pearls, gold, silver, etc to be 'mine'. Meera Bai had an idol of Shri Krishna. She sang, '*Me're` to giridhara gopaala doosaro nakoyee*' (Only Giridhar Gopal is mine; I have no other). If you also say, 'no one else is mine', to the image of Shri Krishna, it will make you free of the *mamataa* (emotional attachment) you have for the objects of this world. Therefore, if you listen to discourses on Vedanta, but don't do the bhakti that frees you from worldly attachments, it is not very intelligent!

The *duraachaara* (wrong behavior) that has come into society – stealing, promiscuity, violence, falsehood, dishonesty, etc – can be removed only by Dharma (the constitution of righteousness) and *sadaachaara* (an upright and proper lifestyle). The bad

tendencies will be given up when you have *nishthaa* (firm faith) in sadachar.

And, the mamata for worldly objects that has settled into your heart will be removed only when mamata for Bhagwan fills your heart. The *aham-bhaava* (feeling of 'I'; identifying with the individual body) that is established in your mind will be removed only when you believe that you belong to Bhagwan. Thus, believe that Bhagwan alone is yours if you want to remove worldly attachments; and believe that you belong to Bhagwan to remove the subtle pride of individuality.

What is it that fills the stomach of your 'mine'? 'Diamonds are mine, money is mine, and the house is mine.' Your feeling of 'mine' is bolstered by worldly objects. So, instead of worldly objects filling your stomach, fill your 'mine' with Bhagwan. The stronger the feeling, 'Bhagwan is mine,' the greater will be your detachment for worldly objects.

Bharee saraaya raheema lakhi aapu pathika firi jaaya.

(Rahim says that a passerby who comes to give water turns away as soon as he sees that the pot is already full.)

Then, Bhagwan will abide in your *hridaya* (heart)! *Me're` to giridhara gopaala doosaro na koyee.'* When a person fills his heart with Bhagwan, this interactive world will no longer fill his heart. And when you feel, 'I belong to Bhagwan', it will weaken your pride, your identification with your body. You will no longer feel, 'I am the one who owns the diamonds, pearls, gold and silver, etc.' You will feel, 'I am the one who has Bhagwan!'

Then you will be filled with Bhagwan. When you feel that you belong to Bhagwan, your 'I' will shrink.

Look; if you are proud of your wealth, think of people who are wealthier than you. When Indian millionaires go to America, they feel like paupers before the American millionaires. Then, when they return to India and see others who are not as wealthy as they are, their ego is inflated again.

Nobody is greater than Bhagwan. Your pride will fade when you look at Bhagwan. So, to remove your ego, think, 'Only Bhagwan is mine.' This is called 'bhakti'. 'Bhagwan is mine and I belong to Him.' You are progressing step by step on the path of Vedanta.

Do you know that all the great Vedantis have been bhaktas? Wasn't Shankaracharya bhagwan a bhakta of Bhagwan? He wrote:

Sa chinmayo neelimaa – Shri Krishna's blue form is *sacchidaanandaghana* (Sat = pure existence, Chit = pure consciousness, Anand = pure joy, gnana = filled with). He has told us how to do *dhyana* (mediate on Bhagwan).

*Yamunaatatatanikatasthitavrindaavanakaanane`mahaaramye`
kalpadrumatalabhoomau charanam charanopari sthaapya,
tishthantam ghananeelam svate`jasaa bhaasayantamiha
vishvam peetaambara-paridhaanam
chandanakarpooraliptasarvaangam.*

(Prabodha Sudhakar 184, 185.)

‘Prabodha Sudhakar’ was written by Shankaracharyaji. This shloka describes Krishna’s self-effulgent beauty as He stands in a beautiful arbor near the Jamuna river.

Apart from this, you would surely have read the ‘Shatpadi’, also written by him. One shloka in it says:

*Daamodara-gunamandira-sundaravadanaaravinda govinda,
bhavajaladhi-mathanamandara-paramandaramapanata tvam
me`.*

(O Govind, Your Mother had tied a rope round Your waist, You are a temple of good qualities, the greatest of which is compassion. Your face is like a beautiful flower. Please help me cross over the sea of this world.)

Thus, unless and until you get Bhagwan’s bhakti, and your *vritti* (mental inclinations; thoughts) become *bhagavadaakaara* (take the form of Bhagwan), the Gnan of Vedanta will stay on your lips but won’t enter your being. You can win theological debates, defeating your opponents, but the aridity, hardness, and bitterness in your heart needs a *rasa-pravaaha* (stream of sweet emotions; love). And, if this *rasa-pravaha* is for the *sansaara* (interactive world), for an individual, for gold, wealth, etc, your heart will be filled with *dukha* (sorrow) sooner or later. If it is for Bhagwan your heart will be filled with *sukha* (happiness and contentment).

One more thing should be kept in mind: this world is full of attractive objects. If you love someone, there is a chance of developing a physical relationship, but if you love Rama,

Krishna, Shiva or Vishnu, your love will make you free of the bondage of worldly love. You have to meet your Beloved. The path is unknown. Meditating on Bhagwan frees you from worldly attachments without binding you. In fact, it will free you from worldly bondage. Therefore, there is no conflict between Bhakti and Vedanta.

There was a Mahatma. He was a Dandi Swami, and I had great respect for him. He did the *poojaa* (ritual worship) of Bhagwan Shaligram (a round stone worshipped as a form of Bhagwan Vishnu). All our Shankaracharyas do *aaraadhanaa* (formal worship). Swami Krishnatirtha was the Shankaracharya of Puri. He sat for three or four hours doing puja every day. Swami Karpatreyaji Maharaj worshipped Lalitambika Devi for four hours every day. Whoever is seated on the Shankaracharya position does ritual worship even today.

There are two kinds of people. One kind rise step by step to reach a level from where there is no falling. The other kind tries to fly up to their goal. They get no support, or means for steadying themselves. They come back to where they started from without achieving anything.

Now, when the Mahatma was doing the puja of Saligram Bhagwan, some Dandi Swamis came there. I was present when they came. We had a long discussion that day. Swamiji was very learned. I had gone there at about eleven in the morning, and it was four in the afternoon when I returned. We discussed the form of the Ishwara in the Nyaya and other Darshans (the six

branches of our philosophy). The visiting Mahatmas asked Mahatmaji, 'Why do you do the puja of Saligram?'

Swamiji replied, 'Look; I travel in motor cars and air planes. I am critical of Nehruji and Mahatma Gandhi. If you ask why I, being a Sadhu, travel in air planes and cars, and get involved in politics, I will be very pleased, because you will be making me free of the world; you will be leading me towards Paramartha (the supreme goal) and *vairagya* (detachment from worldly considerations). However, the only fault you find in me is my doing puja of Saligram Bhagwan! Is this the only impurity you find in me?'

Thus, my brother, any good work is *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress). You can do *japa* (ritual chanting). If a Sanyasi fails to do twelve thousand japa of the *pranava* (Oum), his *nishthaa* (staunch faith) is weakened.

There is love in every heart, so give your love to Bhagwan. Use your body to do Dharma, meaning, lead a life that is in keeping with what is right and proper. Attach your *mana* (emotional mind) to Bhagwan. Use your *buddhi* (intellect) to think about Bhagwan. And, don't keep your Aham ('I'; the pride of individuality) separate; dissolve it into Bhagwan. You will see that chanting '*brahmaasmi*' (I am the Brahman) won't be the only thing in your life. There will be Dharma in your body, love for Bhagwan in your heart, thoughts of Bhagwan in your mind, and the feeling of being a separate individual will be merged into Bhagwan. This becomes Vedanta. In Vedanta, this is called *samanvaya* (union; coordination).

The ultimate enlightenment that destroys the fundamental *avidyaa* (nescience; ignorance about the Self) is when you get the direct personal experience of the Atma and the non-dual Brahman being one, and the substratum of all that exists. This experience is created by hearing the *mahaavakya* (ultimate statements of the Vedas) like 'Tattvamasi'. (Tat = That, the Brahman, tvam = you, the Atma, asi = is. You are the Atma that is the Brahman). Once this *vritti* (mental inclination) is aroused there is no scope for any other *vritti* or form.

Do you think that you will no longer be a devoted wife, if you study Vedanta? Or will you stop caring for your mother and father? Bhagwan is the Mother of our mother, and the Father of our father. He is the Father of the whole world. We are not to give up doing the japa of His name, nor His puja. We are to do these all our life, as long as we live. We are to maintain sadachar and bhakti, and experience our Atma in the form of the Paramartha.

That, which clashes with Bhakti, Dharma, and the practice of Yoga (attaching our Self to Bhagwan) is not Vedanta. It is a flight of the intellect. It should not be given much thought. You should keep your life *sa-rasa* (filled with the sweet emotion of bhakti).

Question: What is the difference between *vaasanaa* (avid desire; lust) and *sanskaara* (subtle subconscious impressions)?

Answer: Sanskara is the *beeja* (seed) and vasana is the *ankur* (shoot). If you want to grow a tree, you plant a seed in the ground. The seed of a mango is different and the seed of a tamarind is different. The seed of a grape vine is different from the seed of an almond. All these seeds contain the sanskaras of their individual leaves, flowers, and fruits, but none of this is visible in the seed.

When the seed sprouts, it swells, then it splits, and then a shoot emerges. Leaves appear when the shoot becomes a stem. Later on flowers appear and then the fruits appear and become sweet or sour.

None of this can be found by examining the seed. The *guthli* (kernel) of a mango is very pungent. Have you ever broken one and tasted it? As children we used to enjoy doing this. The seed of a tamarind, however, is not at all sour! Yet the sweet mango and sour tamarind emerge from these seeds. If you've ever bitten the seed of a sour lime you will know that it contains not the slightest flavor of the lime.

So, sanskara is that, which is present in our *hridaya* (heart). A child has the *vritti* (mental inclination) of *kaama* (lust) in his heart, but it is not visible. None of his dormant inclinations are apparent at that stage. He may cry sometimes and laugh

sometimes. The parents have disputes but children play among themselves. Sometimes there is a fight and the children complain to their mother or father. The parents start quarreling over their children. Sometimes such a quarrel becomes a lifelong enmity! The children, however, forget their dispute in a little while and start playing together again. Thus, the children are better than the adults, aren't they?

The *beej* (seed) is the *sanskara* in the heart. A latent *sanskara* is called a *beej*. It is seated in the heart, and begins to grow in due course. When a child grows up he begins to feel *kaama* (desire), he feels *lobha* (greed), and he feels *krodha* (anger). If you offer a little child a hundred rupee note and a shiny red paper, he will choose the red paper; but when he grows up it is the money he will choose!

The difference between *vasana* and *sanskara* is just that the *sanskara* is in the seed form whereas the *vasana* manifests and affects others. *Vasana* is a kind of fragrance. The *donaa* (a left folded to make a cup) in which you keep champa flowers will retain a subtle fragrance even after the flowers are removed. It is the same with the *sanskaras* and *vasanas*.

Look; Bhagwan is asking you for something. Bhagwan is nowhere else in the world; He is with us. He tells us, 'Come into My *sharana* (refuge). I will give you Mukti (liberation from all suffering). My brother, you have two valuable things that are very dear to Me.'

Maiye`va mana aadhatsva mayi buddhim nive`shaya.

(Gita 12. 8)

(Place your heart in Me and settle your mind on me.)

Just as you keep your money in a Bank, or a Safe Deposit locker, you have two very valuable things. Nobody needs to steal them; they slip away to the wrong place on their own. For example, youngsters these days slip away without telling their parents. Later they say, 'I have fallen in love with this person.'

Love stays in the *mana* (emotional mind), and thoughts stay in the *buddhi* (intellect). Bhagwan says, 'You will face *dukha* (sorrow) if your *pyaara* (loved one) gets attached to any other.'

As long as the person is unsure of your love, he will value you, but as soon as he comes to know that you love him, he will start giving you trouble. Even Sadhus get trapped in the homes of people who live in the Himalayas. They go to the Himalayas in search of Bhagwan, and end up drawing water for the family who feed them well and show respect. People speak sweet words, garland the Sadhus, and ask them to stay with them for a few days. We Sadhus are aware that they know nothing about Bhagwan. They are deluded, and they want the Sadhus to become deluded too! They tell us, 'You are Bhagwan incarnate!'

Thus, the love in the heart becomes scattered. It flows towards people who praise us and eulogize us. People trap Gurujis by showering praise on them. Our *pyaara* (love; affection) goes towards the people who praise us, and our *vichaara* (thinking; intellect) goes towards the source of our *sukha* (happiness and contentment) and *svaartha* (personal benefit). We apply our intellect to how we can get what we want.

So, Bhagwan said, 'My child, you have two things that are dangerous to keep. If they go to the wrong places, they will cause you much suffering. So, bring them here and keep them safe with Me.

Maiye`va mana aadhatsva mayi budhdim nive`shaya.

I am the Safe Deposit locker. I am the Bank where you should keep your mind and heart. Then there will be no danger of them straying to the wrong place. They won't even go to your house.'

These days even married women get trapped into falling in love with another man – maybe a cousin, nephew, brother-in-law, or someone else. There is no telling where your buddhi and pyara may get trapped, so get them insured with Bhagwan.

The mana is *amoorta* – it has no form. You have never seen the mana, how long or broad it is; whether it is red, black, or yellow. You see the objects that come into the mana, you don't see the mana. So, place the love in the mana in Bhagwan. When both the mana and the buddhi are placed in Bhagwan you will be abiding in Bhagwan. '*Ata oordhva*' means, there is no doubt about this.

First attach your vasana to Bhagwan. Then the sanskara will begin to get transformed. Sanskaras come from past lives. They also come from grandparents of both sides, from the parents, and from the food eaten by the mother during pregnancy. Then, there is the influence of the associates during the formative years, and the food eaten by the child.

Attach your inclinations and thoughts to Bhagwan. See Him as your Atma (Self), as your Master, as your friend. See Him as your son, your husband, your Beloved.

Look, my brother, you will not get anything from this world. It is a *mrigatrishnaa* (like a mirage in the desert that makes a deer run on and on in search of water) to think you will get something worthwhile here. That, which you desire, cares nothing for you. You desire gold, pearls, diamonds, etc but they never object if a thief takes them away from you. They never call out to you if they fall out of your pocket. They feel no loyalty for their owner. They don't even recognize you! It is you who says, 'This is mine. This belongs to me,' and run after them. They did not remain with your forefathers, or parents, and they will not remain with you or your children. Why are you spoiling your life for them?

Thus, it becomes clear that vasana creates sanskaras and vasana emerges from sanskaras, and both are attached to you because of *avidyaa* (nescience), because of your not knowing that you are the Atma and the Atma is the non-dual Brahman that is the substratum of all that exists. Neither sanskara nor vasana exists in our *svaroopa* (essence; true form).

: 7 :

Question: To understand that the *taadaatmya* (identification with the body) is present does not remove the *tadatmya*. What is the reason for this? And, how can we get rid of the *tadatmya*?

Answer: This is actually a point for Vedantis (people who study Vedanta; the theory that the non-dual Brahman is the substratum of all that exists) to focus on. My brother, it is true that we often poke fun at it, but I am myself, a Vedanti! My *nishthaa* (staunch faith) is in the *advaita-brahma* (non-dual Brahman). The *jignaasu* (seekers of Gnan) slip away from the principle. They have to become more solid in their faith.

Tadatmya can be with *sukha* (pleasure and contentment), and it can be with *vichaara* (profound thought; convictions). There is a *tadatmya* with *sattaa* (authority; existence of matter). Just think that you have developed *tadatmya* with *bhoga* (sensual pleasures) or the objects of *bhoga*. What is this? It is the *sukha-buddhi* (conviction that this object will give pleasure) has been developed for some indulgence. You feel that there is *sukha* in these objects, *sukha* in a man or woman, *sukha* in love and friendship, marriage, wealth, etc.

This is a *bhram* (false belief).

A tadatmya has been developed with sukha. And, you try to remove this by giving vichar to the *nitya-anitya* (eternal-transitory), or the *che`tana-jada* (conscious-insensate matter).

You have placed sukha in the jada and you say, 'this insensate object is *drishya* (that, which can be known by the senses). I am separate from it.' You have placed your sukha in the anitya and think, 'this is anitya but I am nitya.' This does not mean that you have *vairaagya* (detachment) from the jada or the anitya. You are trying to free yourself of the tadatmya without having real tadatmya (with the Atma)! Please make a note of this point.

As long as you have sukha-buddhi for any worldly object, you cannot give up that object. Where is the nitya-sukha in food? Where is it in clothes, men or women? Yet people are convinced that they can get sukha by telling lies, demeaning or insulting someone, or by some worldly gain.

You have to follow the *karma* (serial order) given by Vedanta. You have to listen to me with the knowledge that I am an authority on Vedanta.

You should first have the conviction that sukha does not lie in any worldly object. This is called vairagya. Then comes the conviction that the objects of the world are jada; they are insensate matter. None of the attractive objects have any love for us; it is we who love them. This is the *vive`ka* (discriminating; separating) of jada and chetan.

After that you have to accept the principle that the objects of this world are *asat* (not Sat; transitory). They are *mithyaa* (relative truths, like ripples on a sea), and the Atma is the Sat (the truth that can never be negated).

If you want to progress step by step as directed by Vedanta, get vairagya first. Then get the understanding that all worldly objects are jada, separate from the chetan. After that you have to give deep thought to the fact that the Atma is Sat and everything in this world is *asat* and *mithya*.

If you proceed in the order given by Vedanta, and think about the *tadatmya* you have developed for things that are transient and illusionary, the reality will become stable.

Do you get *mithya sukha* by eating a mango without having vairagya? You may reply, 'I am not a mango. I get pleasure when I eat a mango. How will I have *tadatmya* with a mango?'

Place the mango on the weighing scale of discrimination. The mango is there. When you put it in your mouth and eat it, it goes into your stomach. You will feel identification with it even if you don't say it!

You won't get the true enjoyment of eating a mango until it becomes a part of you. A roti (unleavened bread) is a roti until it becomes a part of your body. It is a roti as long as it is on a plate, but as soon as you eat it, it becomes your 'I'. Then, it is

digested and the waste discarded by the body. One was an *upaade`ya mala* (desirable waste matter), one was *mein mala* (waste matter that was 'I') and the other was *tyaajya mala* (discardable waste matter). Then it became a fertilizer that will turn into mala (waste matter) once more.

When doctors drain water from the body we realize what a lot of liquid and solid waste can come out of this body. And, this is what people refer to as their 'I'! What will be the weight of the bones in your body? What will be the weight of the flesh, mucus, stool and urine? This is where people's *tadatmya* is seated! Then, whatever seems to give *sukha* to the body is what a person develops *tadatmya* for.

So long as you feel *sukha* lies in the objects of this world, you will remain enslaved by them. You become a slave because of your *sukha-buddhi*. This thinking will bind you and make you a diseased person. It will definitely have one of these results: if you have *preeti* (love) for eating, it will lead to ill health, and if you have *preeti* for a person it will lead to your becoming enslaved.

Therefore, the best way to be free of *tadatmya* is to weaken the belief that anything in this world can give you *sukha*.

: 8 :

Question: When Sadhus do things that are against the Shastras (ancient books of religion), is it because of their *vaasanaa* (avid desires) or is it because of their *prakriti* (nature)?

Answer: Become a Sadhu first, and then I will tell you! People don't look at their own *aachaara* (behavior; lifestyle); they look at the *achara* of other people!

A Sadhu can pretend to have *vasanas*, and he can also get trapped in them. It can also happen that he becomes *Mukta* (liberated; enlightened), but an old *vasana* he had blocked raises its head for a while, and then he quiets it.

How will you know what is in the mind of another? Tell me, can you tell whether I will take the left aisle when I get up from my talk today, or the right one? Can you tell me whether I will look to the left or to the right or straight, in the next moment? How can you know what goes on in the mind of another person? You can't even predict the movements of an ant, yet you try to understand the actions of other people!

Understand yourself first! The Yoga Darshan gives this *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress) for understanding the *mana* (emotional mind) of another person.

Pratyayasya parachittagnanam.

(3. 29)

Look at your own mental inclinations. Observe how they move – in a straight direction, or a reverse direction. What object do you see that gives rise to *lobha* (greed) in you? What gives rise to *krodha* (anger)? Who is it, the sight of whom stirs passion in your heart? When you understand your own thoughts properly, you will be able to understand others’.

Very well; we will talk about Sadhus. A Sadhu gives discourses on Dharma in America and Europe. You believe him to be a Sadhu. However, he does not use water to cleanse himself after going to the toilet. When he goes to parties, he behaves like other guests because he does not want to appear to be backward. How can he impress others that he has a broadminded outlook unless he eats and drinks like them? I can name several Sadhus who take alcohol when they go abroad. They are well-known and respected in society. They dance with ladies. They do not convert people into behaving like a Sadhu; they become like the others because they do not wish to impose their ideals on others. Some of them start believing in the Bible. There is a Mahatma who has never read the Manusmriti, but he can quote passages from the Bible with a fluency that even many Christians cannot match. I meet him occasionally. When I give a discourse on the Dharma Shastras

(ancient books on Dharma), the people of Vrindavan are amazed to hear the things that are written in our *sampradaaya* (religious tradition).

So, the influence of *de`sha* (the land), has its effect even on Sadhus. The *jaati* (caste or community) has an effect, the sampradaya has an effect and the time also has an effect. Sadhus have their own vasanas as well. So, if it seems to you that their behavior is contrary to Dharma, the first psychological conclusion is that you do not have *shraddha* (faith with reverence) for them.

Since you don't have shraddha for Sadhus, let them go. The straightforward thing is that if you try to force yourself to associate with a Sadhu for whom you have no shraddha, your subconscious mind will want to leave them, while your conscious mind will want to stay with them. An internal dilemma will be created. There is no need for you to go to someone for whom you have no shraddha, and whose actions seem to be not in keeping with our Dharma. You will find plenty of people who can teach you Vedanta.

Question: Please Grace us by telling us something that will inspire us with greater *udaarataa* (magnanimity; generosity), *daana* (giving in charity), and other good tendencies.

Answer: Look, my friend, if the sight of this world – seeing the condition of people – fails to inspire you to do daan and develop *vairaagya* (detachment from worldly objects), my talking will not achieve anything.

This tongue is like a clapper on the bell. It merely makes sounds. If you wish to get inspiration, study the lives of people who are magnanimous and philanthropic. If you have the opportunity to associate with such people, do so, and understand the good tendencies they possess.

Nobody takes anything when they leave this world. A baby's fists are clenched when he is born, but he leaves this world with his hands open and empty. The hands tell us, 'I leave with nothing.' Therefore, if that, which is sure to happen one day is made a *saadhana* (method) for obtaining *sukha* (pleasure and contentment), it is a very good thing.

I used to stay with Shri Hanuman Prasadji Poddar, affectionately called 'Bhaiji', at the Gita Press. Our small group was called the 'Kalyana Parivara.' I did the editorial work from

1936 – 1941. One gentleman came and told Bhaiji, ‘My wife is very ill. I have admitted her in the local hospital. She is pregnant. I have to look after her. Please give me some financial assistance.’

Bhaiji gave him two hundred rupees. Two or three days later, he came back, saying, ‘My wife needs to be given oxygen and glucose.’ Bhaiji gave him money again. Three days passed and the man was back. ‘My wife passed away. I have to take her to the crematorium and do her last rites.’

‘This man seems to be a fraud,’ said one of our group.

‘I had understood that the very first day,’ said Bhaiji. ‘I also phoned the hospital to check. It became clear that there was no wife, no one was ill, and no one died. It was a total fraud.’

‘Then why did you keep giving him money?’

‘When the man came and sat before me, I had the distinct feeling that I owed him money from a past birth,’ said Bhaiji. ‘I gave him money to repay my debt.’

I will tell you of another person. A Thakur Saheb lived close to my village. When King George came to India in 1916, he was invited to the Durbar held at Delhi for the King. The King had shaken his hand. Years later, when Thakur Saheb was aged and impoverished, he would lie on a couch, smoking his hookah, on the porch of his house, which was on the main road. One day,

he saw me pass by and called out to me. He ordered a rich sweet to be prepared for me. I began to eat. Then I commented casually, 'Thakur Saheb, there is great pleasure in eating after feeding someone.'

'Look, Babaji,' he said. 'I am an old man and you are still a youngster, so I will tell you something. The greatest pleasure is not in eating after feeding someone; it is in going hungry after having fed someone. I am speaking from experience.'

If a guest came to Thakur Saheb's house, even at night, he would feed the person. He pawned utensils after the grocer stopped giving credit. He would break up a window or a cot for firewood if there was no coal in the house. This is called 'udaara'! The word 'udaara' is made thus: *ut oordhvam shakte`h eeyateeti* – one who gives beyond his capacity is called udaara.

The anand of the Ishwara is in feeding, not in eating. '*Anashnan anyo abhichaakasheeti* (Mundukya Upanishad 3. 1. 1)'. The Ishwara doesn't need to eat, to shine! Vignan Bhikshukrit has written a commentary on the Yoga Darshan. In it he says that the *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body, an individual soul) gets anand from eating, and the Ishwara gets anand from feeding.

The purport is that the one who gets pleasure in taking is the jeeva, and the one who takes pleasure in giving is the Ishwara.

I've told you a little about true magnanimity.

: 10 :

Question: Swamiji, in yesterday's discourse you had said that we should give up *mamataa* (strong affection that becomes a weakness). Is this done on the *bhautika* (gross; earthly) level, or on the *baudhika* (intellectual) level, or both levels? Please explain in detail.

Answer: Mamata is always on the level of the *buddhi* (intellect); it is not on the material level.

For example, if you talk about mamata for wealth, it is bhautik. The mamata for a Devta (presiding deity; divine power) is *daivika* (pertaining to the divine), and mamata for the *dvaita* (duality) or *advaita* (the non-dual) *sampradaaya* (traditional school; a religious sect) is *aadhyaatmika* (spiritual; metaphysical).

Thus, mamata becomes divided into three divisions. The mamata for land, wealth, etc is bhautik, the mamata for a Devi (goddess) or Devta is *aadhidaivika* (pertaining to the divine), and the mamata for the dvaita-advaita principles is *aadhyaatmika* (pertaining to the spiritual). These are the three different types of mamata created by the object it is connected to, but the fact remains that mamata is always mamata.

Mamata means, something that is separate from us, but which we consider to be 'ours'. This is called the *bhaava* (feeling) of mamata. And, when we consider another object to be our 'I' – when we identify with some object – we get the feeling, 'I am the possessor of that object.' The feeling of having something means, 'I am separate from what I have.' Therefore, both *ahamtaa* (the feeling of 'I') and mamata (the feeling of 'mine') exist on a mental level. Both are adyatmik.

The feeling of 'I' and 'mine' can be removed only by *vichaara* (deep thought; unbiased reflection). The method by which they can be removed is neither *tyaaga* (renunciation), nor *tapasyaa* (asceticism; austerities). Vichar is the only method.

Do vichar and think – what is yours? Your grandparents and parents all believed that the land was theirs. They are gone but the land remains. It is the same with gold and silver.

Thus, the *aashraya* (refuge) of mamata is the *aham-bhaava* (feeling of 'I' connected to the mind and body). The Aham-bhava will remain as long as mamata remains. Therefore, the Aham-bhava should be given up first. It is *sthoola* (dense; gross) and it is also extremely *sookshma* (subtle). You must stop considering as 'mine', the things that are outside the body. You must also stop considering as 'mine', the things that are inside the body.

Ahamta and mamata mean, 'I' and 'mine'. I had a friend in Calcutta, Shri Jaydayalji Kaseraj. Two or three Mahatmas came to his house once. He offered them lunch with great respect. Before leaving, they called him. 'Come, Sethji, sit with us a little,' they said. 'We have had a meal at your house. We won't be able to digest it unless we give you something in return.'

Kaseraji sat near them. 'What will you give me?' he asked.

'Look; everything in this world that you consider to be 'I' or 'mine' is a *bandhana* (bondage; fetter). This means, we have caught hold of these with both hands, and because of our stupidity, we believe that they are holding us back. If we let go of them, there is nothing that has caught hold of us. Even those who have great love for us will not bind us. Therefore, to consider anything in this world to be 'I' or 'mine' is to be fettered, and to consider nothing in this world to be 'I' or 'mine' is called Mukti (liberation).'

After giving this teaching, the Mahatmas said, 'Om namo Narayana', and went away. This was a little episode Kaseraji had told me about.

Kaseraji was a very jovial man, respected by even the Governor of West Bengal. I had not yet become a Sanyasi at that time. I would stay at his place whenever I went to Calcutta. One day he told me, 'Punditji, I have obtained half Brahmagnan, but half remains to be obtained.'

‘Kaseraji, what is this half Brahmagnan?’ I asked.

‘The meaning of Brahmagnan is that what belongs to everyone belongs to me, and what belongs to me belongs to everyone,’ he said. ‘I have got half Brahmagnan, and that is, what belongs to everyone belongs to me! I have yet to get the other half – that is, what belongs to me belongs to everyone. Anyway, I am in no hurry to get the full Brahmagnan. If I don’t get it in this life, I will get it in my next birth!’

It is written in the Shastras (ancient books on religion), ‘*Dve`pade`bandhamokshaaya, na mame`ti mame`ti cha.*’ These are two words. One has two letters, and the other has three letters. Mrityu (death) is composed of two letters and amrita is composed of three. A similar definition is given in the Bhagwat, in the chapter on Kapil Deva.

Mame`ti badhyate`jantuh na mame`ti vimuchyate`.

The entire quintessence of Vedanta is in ‘mama’ (mine) and ‘na mama’ (not mine).

You have a hundred rupees. What happens when you give one rupee to someone? The circle of your mamata – which is a hundred – becomes ninety nine. It becomes a little smaller. Your reducing the circle by giving away one rupee is called Dharma. Dharma reduces the expanse of mamata.

In Bhakti – the principle of loving devotion for Bhagwan, and total surrender to Him – a person gives ninety-nine per cent to Bhagwan. Meaning, a bhakta feels that everything he has is Bhagwan's. It is not to be picked up and thrown away; it is to be treated as something that belongs to Bhagwan and he is the caretaker.

In Brahmagnan there is neither one rupee nor ninety-nine rupees. Nothing is 'mine'; nor does 'I' belong to anyone. This is Vedanta, whereas everything belongs to Bhagwan in Bhakti. And in Dharma, the person feels that something belongs to him and is to be given to Bhagwan. Vedanta connects a person to Bhagwan totally. This is how the divisions of Dharma, Bhakti, and Vedanta are made.

Question: Yesterday you had told us that Bhagwan gave Arjuna the teaching of the Gita so that he would get Atmagnan and develop *samataa* (equanimity of outlook). Is it not possible that if Arjuna experienced samata and *asangataa* (aloofness from worldly matters), he would have had the experience that his Atma is above his *kartavya* (duty; the right thing for him to do) and *a-kartavya* (the wrong thing for him to do), and refuse to fight? If this was a possibility, why did Shri Krishna take this method?

Answer: Why do you consider Shri Krishna to be such an *agnaanee* (one who lacks Gnan)? My brother, Shri Krishna is the Guru, is He not? When a Guru tells his disciple something, he does so with the knowledge of the disciple's previous birth. He is aware of the *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress) done by the disciple, and the spiritual level of the disciple. He also knows from where the sadhana should commence in this life, in order to take him to a higher level. If the Guru tells him a sadhana that is too high for him, the disciple will fall. If he tells him a sadhana that is too low, the disciple will find it difficult to rise. Therefore, the sadhana given is according to the disciple's present spiritual level.

You have read in the Gita:

Yadahankaaramaashritya na yotsya iti manyase`.

(18. 59)

(If your ego makes you believe you will not fight.....)

Na yotsya iti (I will not fight)'. Bhagwan took up Arjuna's words.

Na yotsya iti govindamuktvaa tooshneem babhoovaha.

(2. 9)

(Arjuna told Shri Krishna, 'I will not fight,' and became silent.)

'O My friend, You think that you won't fight! You say, "*Na yotsya iti manyase`*". This is your ego.')

Mithyaisha vyavasaayaste` prakritistvaam niyokshyati.

(18. 59).

(Your decision is false, because your very nature will compel you to fight.)

Krishna knew every fiber of Arjuna's body. He knew Arjuna's innate nature and his temperament.

Svabhaavaje`na kaunte`ya nibaddhah sve`na karmanaa,

kartum ne`chhasi yanmohaata karishyasyavashopi tat.

(18. 60)

(O Son of Kunti, your deluded thinking makes you want to avoid fighting, but your own nature – created by your past actions – will make you fight.)

‘Your *svabhaava* (innate nature) is filled with one *karma* (action) – fighting for that, which is right – and you are bound by your own karma. Your reluctance to fight stems from your deluded thinking, but you won’t be able to stop your innate nature from forcing you to fight.’

That means, Shri Krishna knew Arjuna through and through. Shri Krishna went so far as to say, ‘*Yastvaam dve`shti sa maam dve`shti* – Arjuna, whoever is against you is against Me. *Yastvaamanu sa maamanu* – whoever follows you, follows Me.’

Shri Krishna sent a message to Dhritarashtra through Sanjay. ‘*Krishno dhananjayasyaatmaa krishnasyaatmaa dhananjaya*. The name of Krishna’s Atma is Dhananjaya (one of Arjuna’s names), and the name of Dhananjaya’s Atma is Krishna.’ Dhritarashtra had sent Sanjay to Shri Krishna, and this was the reply He sent back.

So, my brother, what will happen to Arjuna? Arjuna had gone into the forest as a Sadhu. He killed a ferocious wild boar that could have disrupted his *tapasyaa* (asceticism done as worship). Arjuna had taken his bow and quiver of arrows with him. He killed the boar with a single arrow. An arrow hit by Shankarji also hit the boar at the same time. Shankarji claimed

that the boar had died from His arrow, and Arjuna claimed that it was his arrow that had killed the boar.

A quarrel arose between Shankarji and Arjuna. Shankarji's followers – the *bhoota-pre`ta* (ghosts and spirits) all gathered round. Shankarji attacked Arjuna with thousands of arrows, spears, and other weapons. Arjuna understood that this was Shankar Bhagwan, but he did not back out of the fight. It is the Dharma of a Kshatriya (warrior class) to face death fearlessly, without turning away, even if fighting Shankarji Himself! 'Shankarji can do *pralaya* (Dissolution). He can kill me, but I will not be induced to give up my Dharma,' said Arjuna.

The Rishis (Sages) tried to intervene. 'What are you doing, Arjuna?' they asked. 'You are wearing the garb of a *tapasvee* (ascetic). You should not fight.'

'I may be in the clothes of a tapasvi,' said Arjuna, 'but my heart is the heart of a Kshatriya. I cannot turn away from a battle even if Shankarji is my opponent.'

Shankarji was pleased with Arjuna. He gifted a divine weapon, called the Pashupatastra to Arjuna. Thus, it was contrary to Arjuna's nature to run away from battle. He was in a Sadhu's garb when he abducted Shri Krishna's sister, Subhadra. The entire Yaduvanshi Army had been assigned to guard her. He sent them all packing!

On one occasion, Naradji caused a quarrel between Shri Krishna and Subhadra. Subhadra pledged to protect a man Shri Krishna had vowed to kill. Naradji sent the man to Subhadra, asking for her protection, because she was the only one who could protect a person Shri Krishna had vowed to kill. Shri Krishna had great love for His sister.

Subhadra went to Shri Krishna. 'I cannot let him go, because I have given My word to Durvasaji that I would kill this man,' said Shri Krishna. 'If I don't kill him, Durvasaji will give a *shaap* (curse) and the whole city will be turned to ashes.'

Subhadra told Arjuna, 'You are my husband. I have decided to save this man's life. You must fight Shri Krishna to save him.'

'I will fight,' replied Arjuna, 'but I have no *saarathee* (driver of the chariot). How can I fight without a sarathi?'

'I have learnt the art of being a sarathi,' said Subhadra. 'I am a better sarathi than Shri Krishna. I will be your sarathi.'

Subhadra drove Arjuna's chariot. Arjuna had become a *rathee* (the Master of the chariot), and there was a battle between Arjuna and Shri Krishna. When Shri Krishna saw His sister driving Arjuna's chariot, His hands trembled, lest one of His arrows hit her accidentally. Then the Mahatmas gathered round them and settled the matter. They punished the man by insulting him, because for an honorable man an insult is akin to

death. Therefore, my brother, don't think that Arjuna's nature would allow him to back out of a fight. Shri Krishna knew this very well. He stated unequivocally:

Dharmyaaddhi yuddhaachre`yonyatkshatriyasya na vidyate`.

(2. 31)

(There is no greater good fortune for a warrior than to fight for a righteous cause.)

Thus, there is no possibility in the mind of Shri Krishna, of Arjuna's not fighting. You can make a note of this in your diary or in your head. The Ishwara does not have *paroksha gnaana* (Gnan that is not known directly). People say, 'We don't know what is on the other side of the wall. We don't know what will happen after a thousand years.'

The Ishwara does not have the right to say that He does not know. He is not limited by *kaala* (time), *de`sha* (place), or *vastu* (object; matter). The Ishwara always has the *saakshaat aparoksha* (direct personal knowledge) Gnan.

The Ishwara does not have *smriti* (remembering) either; He has *anubhava* (experience). Therefore, there is nothing about which the Ishwara is *agna* (ignorant).

Vedanta states clearly that the Ishwara never has paroksha Gnan; He always has aparoksha anubhav. Events that happened

thousands of years ago are also part of Shri Krishna's anubhav; so are the events of the future. He knows about the things that are far off in time and place, and about other people

: 12 :

Question: Yesterday you had told us that even after subduing the *indriya* (the five sense organs and five organs of action), the *mana* (emotional mind) continues to cling to the objects of the senses. Then, what should a *saadhaka* spiritual aspirant) do?

Answer: The meaning of this is that nothing can be achieved by blindfolding your eyes or putting ear-plugs in your ears, or stop eating! The *raaga* (strong attachments) in the heart must be removed.

To remove all the attachments you have for worldly objects it is necessary for you to regulate your intake. Intake means, what you absorb through your senses, and the world you take into your heart. This is Shankaracharyaji's interpretation – *aahiyante` iti aahaaraah vishayaah.*'

Shri Ramanujacharya's interpretation is, 'What is the kind of food you eat?' The food should be *shuddha* (pure according to the Shastras) by *jaati* (group) – meaning, avoiding meat, fish and other items that increase *vaasanaa* (avid desires). Other species have their own vasanas, which come into your heart when you eat their flesh. These avid desires will strengthen your own strong urges for indulging the senses.

Other factors include the place the food is cooked in, the vessels used, and the feelings of the person who does the cooking. All these must be shuddha (pure according to our ancient books on religion).

We, the Brahmins, had the tradition of eating *pukka rasoi* (vegetarian food that is fried or cooked in milk) at the homes of the Kshatriyas (warrior class). We were their Gurus, and they were our disciples. This relationship would have been severed had we refused to accept their hospitality. People here may not know the difference between *pakki rasoi* and *kacchi rasoi* (raw food or food cooked with water). Even when they made *chutney* (a coriander sauce) after washing the grinding stone thoroughly, a subtle smell of onions and garlic remained.

Recently, Doctor Samani told me not to eat anything cooked in a non-stick pan. 'We don't know about the side effects it will have on the food, because of the chemicals used in creating these pans,' he said. 'The food may have an adverse effect on the person who eats the food cooked in these pans.'

The *de'sha* (place) also has an effect. A Church was built in London about a hundred and fifty years ago. When the priests gathered to chant their prayers, the head priest had a sudden intense urge to eat meat. Later on he spoke of this to the others. 'Such a thing has never happened before,' he said. 'I cannot understand how my mind shifted from God to this

sudden intense urge for meat.’ All the others said that they had also felt a similar urge. A committee was appointed to investigate this. It was found that a slaughter house had stood on the land a hundred years previous to the church being built.

The Indian tradition is that before building a house, people made sure that no bones or other impure substances were buried there. There was a method for this, called the ‘Shalya-shodhan’. This was before the *vaastu-vidyaa* (technique for propitious architecture) became prevalent. It is no longer needed.

Thus, the *bhoomi* (land; earth) has an effect, the vessel has an effect, and the person who cooks also has an effect. All these affect the person who eats the food. If a lady cooks food for a Mahatma with the hope that his blessings will fulfill her desire for a son, it will affect the Mahatma who eats the food. Sadhus have experienced such reactions on several occasions.

It happened that a Sadhu had a meal at the house of a goldsmith. After eating, he lay down to rest awhile before leaving. He saw a gold necklace kept in the room, and experienced an urge to steal it. He called his host and asked, ‘Who are you?’

‘I am a goldsmith.’

‘Now I understand.’

Thus, the *anna* (food) effects the consumer, the place effects the consumer, and the motions of the one who does the cooking also effects the one who eats the food. And, what if the lady who cooks is unhappy? If a cook grieves as he cooks, or a cow weeps as she is milked, it will affect the person who has food and the milk.

Therefore, Shri Ramanujacharya says that what you eat should be pavitra, the vessel it is cooked in should be pavitra, and the condiments added to the food should be pavitra.

A Punditji from Vrindavan had gone to Sindh, at the request of some friends. He found the dal they made very tasty, so when it was time for him to return to Vrindavan, he asked his hostess for the recipe, so he could cook it like that at home. He found that the condiments included powdered fish!

Furthermore, the food should be purchased with money earned honestly. The item you eat should be rightfully yours. The food you eat should have all these qualities. Therefore, '*aahaarashuddhau sattvashuddhih*' (*Chandogya Upanishad* 7. 26. 2), is interpreted by Ramanujacharya as eating food that is pure in every aspect.

Shri Shankaracharya says, 'No; this is not enough. *Aahaara* (intake; food) also means that, which you imbue through your sense organs.'

Who do you look at? What do you listen to? Do you listen to gossip about women, money matters, enemies, and atheists? Please don't get upset about my saying all this, because I am an old man, past seventy five! When sports like cricket are played, ladies – especially the young ones – enjoy watching the athletic physiques of the players. This is a *bhoga* (intake; indulgence) of the eyes. When men enjoy seeing pictures of scantily dressed women, it is also a bhog of the eyes. The eyes absorb these; it is food for them.

There is a lady who is allergic to the champa flower. Her skin breaks out with a severe rash if she touches a champa flower accidentally. This is the effect of touch. An elephant gets caught because of its weakness for the pleasure of touch. A deer gets caught because of its weakness for the pleasure of sound.

There is a shloka in the Garuda Purana.

Kuranga-maatanga-patanga-bhringa-meenaah hataah
panchabhire`va pancha

(1. 115. 21).

A deer is entranced because of the sense of hearing. An elephant is entranced because of the sense of touch. A moth because of its attraction for light; it falls into the flame and dies. A fish is trapped because of its sense of taste, and a bee is

trapped because of its love for fragrance. All five get ensnared because of their inability to control one sense organ.

E`kah pramaadee sa katham na hanyate` yah se`vate` panchabhire`va pancha.

This human is *aasakta* (infatuated) with the objects of all five senses – sound, touch, smell, taste and feel. He undoubtedly gets trapped by these.

Our *mana* (emotional mind) is molded by our ahara. What the mana becomes depends on the kind of intake the body gets. Our intake should be such that our mind becomes pure. This is why the Chandogya Upanishad says that when the ahara is shuddha, the mind and life of a person also become shuddha.

Let us take it that you have ensured ahara shuddha in your life. However, your *buddhi* (intellect) is convinced about the benefit of some item you love to eat. Even if you give up that item, you will still have *raaga* (attachment) for it. Raaga means remembering a past *sukha* (pleasure with contentment); when the memory of something you enjoyed keeps cropping up. You ate *kadhi-bhaata* (curry-rice) at somebody's house. You liked it so much that the memory of that flavor returns to your mind again and again. You went to Bengal and relished the chamcham, sandesh, and other local sweets. 'Such sweets are not available in Vrindavan!' you say.

Such things leave their *sanskaara* (subtle subconscious impressions), and this is called raaga. The Yoga Sutra defines it as '*sukhaanushaayee raagah* (2. 7)' – that, which keeps reminding you of a past sukha is called raaga. This raaga remains even after a person gives up the object he was fond of.

When will the raaga be removed?

'*Param drishtvaa nivartante*' (Gita 2. 59)' – it will be removed when you get a *darshana* (vision of a revered object) of the *para-tattva* (the highest essence); the Atma-tattva. This is above and beyond everything. It is the most internal.

*Indriye`bhya paraahyarthaa arthe`bhyashcha param manah,
manasastu paraabuddhi buddhiraatmaa mahaan parah.*

(*Katha Upanishad* 1. 3. 10)

(The indriyas – meaning the senses – are more subtle than the sense objects, and the mana is more subtle than the indriyas. The buddhi – meaning the intellect – is at a deeper level than the mana, and the Atma is the most subtle of all, at the deepest internal level.)

All are *antaranga* (closest to the innermost core of pure existence) – one deeper than the other. First come the *vishaya* (objects of the senses), then the senses and the five *tanmaatraa* (subtle forms of the five elements – earth, water,

fire, air and space) that are at an even deeper level. That means that, which is beyond even your buddhi, which gives existence, awareness, and pleasure, is '*para*'. It is called para in Sanskrit. Para means within; inside. So much so, that there is nothing that is deeper. It means our Self, our Atma. When you get the *saakshaatkaara* (direct personal experience) of it, all raaga will be removed.

A complete removal of *raaga-dve'sha* (attachment-aversion) is not possible unless a person gets Atma-sakshatkara. If you say that your raaga will be destroyed when you see the One who lives in Goloka (Shri Krishna's divine realm) or Vaikuntha (Vishnu Bhagwan's divine realm), it is not so. There will be a transformation of your raaga. Your raaga for a donkey will become raaga for Bhagwan. The object of your attachment will change, but the *vritti* (mental inclination) of raaga will remain in your heart.

When will that be destroyed?

It will be destroyed when you get the sakshatkara of the *adhishtaana* (substratum) of the One you love. When you experience the source of your consciousness your raaga will be negated. You will realize that raaga is *mithyaa* (a relative truth).

Therefore, '*param drishtvaa nivartante*' means having the experience that the Atma is the Paramatma (supreme Atma).

Purushaan na param kinchit saa kaashthaa saa paraa gatih
(Katha Upanishad 1. 3. 11).

(Nothing is greater than the Purusha – the Atma – which is the ultimate goal of life.)

The definition people have given to the Paratattva – that it is far from us – does not have the sanction of the Upanishad.

‘What am I?’

This is what you have to know. The question was, ‘What should a sadhak do?’ A sadhak should strive to become free of all worldly attachments, and this can be achieved only when you get the darshan of the Paramatma.

Question: What is the purpose of *moorti-poojaa* (idol worship)?

Answer: Look; the Paramatma is not constrained by the laws of *de'sha* (place; land), *kaala* (time; era), or *vastu* (object). It is He who shows us *desha*, *kaala* and *vastu*, and all these are in Him.

Desha is what you call space that has length and breadth. The greatest expanse of space is smaller than the Paramatma. It is *kalpita* (imagined) in what you call Time. The beginning and end of the time you can calculate is smaller than the Paramatma's *svaroopa* (essence; true form). And, the *vastu* that you call objects (or matter) are *tanmaatras* (subtle forms of the five elements) of *shabda* (sound), *sparsha* (feel), *roopa* (appearance), *rasa* (flavor), and *gandha* (fragrance). These are the qualities of *aakaasha* (space), *vaayu* (air), *agni* (fire), *jala* (water), and *prithivee* (earth). The Paramatma is bigger than all of them.

How will you have *bhakti* (loving devotion) for them? To do the *poojaa* (ritual worship) of that, which is beyond the grasp of your *buddhi* (intellect), *mana* (emotional mind), and *indriya* (the five sense organs and five organs of action) you have to create a *desha*. 'We will do His puja here'. For example, the *vraja-bhoomi* (area round Vrindavan), Kashi (Varanasi),

Ayodhya, Naimisharanya, Shriranga, etc are all holy places. Worship of that, which is beyond all places, has to be done by imagining His presence in one place.

The worship of Time has to be done by imagining His presence in time. For example, the days of *e`kaadashi* (the eleventh day of the lunar calendar), Janmashtami (Shri Krishna's birth date), Ramanavami (Shri Rama's birth date), etc are holy days.

Similarly, the worship of that, which is beyond all objects, all images, has to be done by imagining His presence in one moorti. For example, a Shaligram (a round stone worshipped as Vishnu Bhagwan) or a Shivalinga (elliptical stone worshipped as Shankar Bhagwan), a *chaturbhuja* (four-armed) form, or a *dvibhuja* (two-armed) form.

The *amoorta* (formless) has to be worshipped on the basis of the *moorta* (with form) at first. A *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) has to do *se`vaa* (render service) and do the puja of an image when he starts his spiritual journey.

Look; you are the Atma, you are a *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body; an individual soul), you are a *praanee* (a living being) – you would have heard all this! But, if your puja was to be done, where would it be done?

When you apply *chandana* (sandalwood paste) to this body, it is doing puja of the Atma? Are you worshipping the Atma when

you garland this body? No; puja is done with the belief that it is the Atma in the body that you are worshipping.

People offer food with great respect. How warmly you feed me! Now, if I were to say, 'I am the *nitya-shuddha-buddha-mukta* (eternal-pristine-enlightened-liberated) Atma, so there is no need to offer food to me,' well, the *praana* (life spirit) in the person who eats, is what is worshipped as the Atma. Touching the feet respectfully is also a worship of the Atma that is in the heart of the person. So is applying chandan and garlanding a person.

The Atma is *niraakaara* (formless). If you were to be treated as being nirakara you would find it a very unpleasant experience! Isn't the Atma formless? Isn't the Atma *amara* (immortal)? Yet this small body that is born and will die is treated respectfully as the container of the Atma. The puja of Bhagwan is done in the same way.

Will you do the puja of all stones because of your faith that the Ishwara is present in the Shaligram Shila? Will you do the puja of all the clay in the world? No; you will do the puja of one round stone, a Shaligram Shila that comes from the bed of the Gandaki river. You will make a Shivalinga of earth, and worship it as Shankar Bhagwan. All the water in the world is a form of Bhagwan – will you worship all water? No; you will put water in a *kalasha* (a pot of a particular shape) and worship the water in

it. Will you worship the *agni tattva* (the essence – or element – of fire)? No; you will set fire to some pieces of wood and pour oblations into the sacred fire, saying, ‘*Agnaye`svaahaa`*’. *Vaayu* (air; the wind) is worshipped with the action of fanning Bhagwan’s idol, and *aakaasha* (space) is worshipped by uttering words like Om, Rama, Soham, etc.

Thus, the way we can worship the things that are beyond our reach, beyond the grasp of our *mana* and *buddhi* is by worshipping a small symbol of the vast essence, with faith that you are worshipping the whole. The Ishwara is *ajanmaa* (unborn; not subject to birth). He is *vyaapaka* (all-pervading), *amara* (not subject to death; immortal), *nitya* (eternally present). He is *nitya-shuddha-buddha-mukta*. Therefore, the moorti will be before you, and the *nirguna* (without attributes), *niraakaara* (without form) Paramatma will come into your heart.

Think of it this way: a little boy walks, holding his father’s finger. You ask him, ‘Why are you holding your father’s finger? He is so tall. Why are you holding on to his finger?’ Won’t the child fall if he lets go of the support that steady his faltering little feet? The child will continue to hold his father finger as they walk, and people will say, ‘He is holding his father and walking.’ He holds a finger, but he will say, ‘I am holding my father so that I don’t fall.’

The Paramatma's worship is just like that – you worship a small part of Him, and all of Him is worshipped.

Someone may say that the Ishwara's *praana-pratishtha* (invoking the Ishwara's presence and establishing it in the idol) has not been done. The Ishwara has not been invited to come into the idol. This *sansara* (interactive world) is *saakaara* (with form) in the form of the moorti, and it contains the nirakara essence of the Ishwara.

This is not correct.

Then, what is the quintessence of moorti-puja?

Nothing exists, except the Ishwara. Therefore, the moorti is also a form of the Ishwara. It is not that is the Ishwara there, or has He been invited to come into the moorti? At least recognize the Ishwara somewhere! This is called *sthaaleepulaka nyaya*. You are unable to recognize the Ishwara in a moorti, but want to recognize Him in space?

We believe the logic of sthalipulak nyaya to be akin to cooking rice. The cook lifts out a few grains and presses them with his thumb to see whether they are fully cooked or not. If they are soft enough, it is understood that all the rice in the vessel is fully cooked. It is not necessary to examine every grain in the pot.

If you know the moorti to be the Ishwara, it is called the sthalipulak nyaya on the same principle. If any object in the world is recognized as being the Ishwara, even in the form of a moorti, husband, father, mother, or Guru – if you actually get the *nishtha* (firm conviction) that this is the Paramatma – then the way your husband is the Parameshwara for you, another man is the Parameshwara for his wife. Just as you revere your father and mother, as forms of the Parameshwara, so are other parents revered by their children, and you will be the Parameshwara for your children.

Shri Vallabhacharya considered each one of his seven children to be the Parameshwara. Wherever you look, see Him everywhere. Cultivate the habit of seeing Him everywhere; not with the eyes, but with the heart. If you see the Ishwara in any one place, you will see the Ishwara. I can think of thousands of people who have experienced the Ishwara in the moorti they worshipped.

Thus, the purpose of moorti-puja is this – the moorti is also the Ishwara, so if you understand that He is nirguna, nirakara, ajanma, *avyaya* (limitless), *avinaashee* (eternal), *gnaana-svaroopa* (the essence of Gnan) you will understand your Atma and the Paramatma. So, learn how to create *abhe`da* (lack of difference; oneness).

If you say that the moorti is not the Ishwara – the Ishwara is someone separate – it means that you are giving respect to *dvaita* (duality). A rejection of moorti-puja means an acceptance of duality. Therefore, no rejection should be allowed to enter the mind.

Doesn't the Taittareeya Upanishad say, '*Annam brahm* (3. 2. 1)' (Food is the Brahman)? '*Annam brahm ityupaaseeta* (worship the food as the Brahman)'. Aren't the words, '*aapohishthaamayee bhuvah*' of the Rig Veda (10. 9. 1) spoken in the ritual of the Sandhya Vandan? The Ishavasya Upanishad (18) says, '*agne`ya naya supathaa raaye`*', and the Rig Veda says, '*agnimeele` purohitam*' (1. 1. 1). *Vayo tvame`va pratyaksham brahmaasi*', and '*kam brahm kham brahm*' are also stated in the Vedas.

Therefore, you are to mold your heart in Bhagwan's form. If the heart takes on the form of Bhagwan, the entire Creation becomes this form. My brother, cultivate the habit of doing puja!

: 14 :

Question: What *niyama* (self-imposed discipline) should a *jignaasu* (one who wants Gnan) adopt if he wants to become a Sanyasi?

Answer: There was a man who kept telling his wife that he wants to take Sanyas (the vows of renunciation). One day he wrote a letter to his mother-in-law, asking her and her husband to come and meet him before he left to take the vows of renunciation. The poor lady started to weep, wondering what would happen to her daughter. Just then, her husband came home. 'Why are you weeping?' he asked.

'Our son-in-law is planning to take Sanyas,' she said. 'What will happen to our daughter?'

The man read the letter and said, 'This is not the way Sanyas is taken,' he said.

'Then how is it taken?'

'Shall I show you how a man renounces the world?' asked the husband.

'Yes.'

‘Look; henceforth, you are my mother,’ he told his wife. ‘I am leaving the house as a Sanyasi. Om namo Narayana.’ The man left the house and never came back.

No one becomes a Sanyasi by planning to take Sanyas. Only a person who has an irresistible urge for renouncing this world and finding the Ultimate Truth can observe any niyam and also break any niyam.

Now, I will tell you the niyams. I had gone to Shankaracharyaji to ask him to make me a Sanyasi. ‘I will not give you Sanyas just like that,’ he said.

Then?

‘Eat only moong dal and rotis of jav for six months,’ he said. ‘I will see how well you can control your tongue. You are a Brahmin. Do you observe the daily ritual of Sandhya Vandan? Do you do the *japa* (ritual chanting) of the Gayatri Mantra? Do you do the mandatory *agnihotra* (ritual fire worship) every day? Do you think you will become a Sanyasi by just donning a saffron robe?’

You see, earlier, the Gurus would growl out questions to test the disciple. If the disciple could not tolerate it calmly, he failed the test. ‘This man is not worthy of being a disciple.’ The quality of a *che`laa* (disciple) would be measured by his level of endurance for being abused, being slapped, kept hungry, etc.

Therefore, my brother, Sanyas is taken to follow niyams. How strong is your *jignaasaa* (urge for Gnan)? How ardent is your *mumukshaa* (wish for liberation from the cycle of rebirth)? And, how steady is your *vritti* (mental inclination) for *tyaaga* (giving up the world)? It is commonly said, '*Mana na rangaaye*', *rangaaya jogi kapadaa*.' There are Sadhus who dye the color of their garb, but do not dye their heart in the color of renunciation.

Thus, Sanyas does not mean wearing saffron robes.

There are Purohits (Brahmins who conduct religious rituals), Padres (Christian priests), and Maulvis (Muslim religious leaders). These are Acharyas (Teachers) who look after their instituted religion. They are not Sants (Monks who have renounced the world). They are not *avadhoota* (wandering Monks who keep no possessions).

A Sant is one whose life and mind are free of worldly considerations. They give no importance to anything worldly. A person for whom nothing in this world is important is called a Sant.

Question: A lady is asking how she can develop an inclination for *adhyaatma* (spirituality) in children, while teaching *vignaana* (science).

Answer: Is she a teacher? Anyway, it is a good question.

You see, *vignan* is meant to make changes in material objects, whereas *Dharma* (religion) is meant to make changes in the *bhaava* (feelings; outlook). *Bhakti* is meant to destroy *raaga-dve'sha* (attachment-aversion) for the interactive world, and *Tattvagnan* (Gnan about the essence of the Brahman that is the non-dual substratum of all that exists) is meant to destroy *agnana* (lack of Gnan; ignorance about the Brahman).

Those who have *agnan* – an inclination for the objects of the external world – should be allowed to spend their lives according to science. *Vignan* is not an enemy. It has given us the railway, motor cars, air planes, telephone, loud speakers, and so many other facilities. We should not be averse to *vignan*.

If you wish to remove the suffering in this world, *vignan* will help by providing the things you need, and *Dharma* will help to remove sorrow by *karmaanushtaana* (religious rituals for specific benefits), and *Yoga* will help to reduce suffering by

making you disciplined. Vedanta will always, under all circumstances, give you *sukha* (happiness and contentment). No trace of *dukha* (sorrow) exists in Vedanta.

The teaching of adhyatma should be given with the viewpoint of bringing goodwill in our life, and making us trustworthy. It is not the task of Vedanta to make human beings more humane; it is the task of Dharma and adhyatma. Otherwise, all humans have two hands and two feet!

Therefore, the meaning of teaching adhyatma is that you make a human being develop the qualities of a human being. Let him have the habit of speaking the truth and avoid hurting anybody. Let him not take anything that belongs to someone else, or become greedy and make others suffer because of his greed. He should not cast improper looks at any woman who is not his wife. The meaning of an *aadhyaatmika jeevana* (a spiritual life) is that our life should be self-restrained and ethical.

Don't start by giving Brahmagnan (Gnan about the Brahman) to a child! Teach the child to respect his parents, love his siblings, and be friendly with his peers. When *sadguna* (good qualities) come into his life he will automatically develop a wish for spirituality.

If a child is not given value education first – if someone wants to start off by teaching Brahmagnan – there will be no spiritual progress. Start by making a child a good human being. Let

goodness be developed first. I can make anyone the Brahman in a minute! However, it takes me years to make a person a good human, and even then, I am not always successful!

That means, we need to develop humane qualities in our life if we want spiritual progress. And, this is the kind of teaching that should be given.

Question: Maharajshri, you have come from Vrindavan, so please tell us something about Shri Krishna's *leelaa* (divine play; frolics).

Answer: To tell me to 'say something about Shri Krishna's leela' is like throwing me into the sea! If you ask about a particular leela I will tell you. All right; I will tell you about *raasa-leelaa* – Shri Krishna's divine play of dancing with the *gopee* (milkmaids) of Vrindavan.

Bhagwan is the Paramatma. He is called '*sacchidaananda*' (Sat = pure existence, Chit = pure consciousness, Anand = pure joy; the Brahman that is the substratum of all that exists). The active Sat manifests as Dharma and the passive Sat stays in the form of Samadhi.

Similarly, when the Chit – the consciousness in a person – is active, it creates the *prapancha* (interactive world), the object, and becomes all-knowing. When passive, the Chit remains in the form of the Brahman.

The Anand is the form of the Atma when it is inactive. Its essence is *paramaananda* (supreme bliss). When it is active it is *nrityat* – it dances! The Anand that dances – the joyfulness in the life of a person – is *raasa* (dance) in its complete form. In its

incomplete form it manifests in four forms. The *moola roopa* (basic form) of Anand is the Sama Veda. The Gandharva Veda that is attached to it contains music, dance, singing and drama. These are its four sections.

When Anand takes on a form in life it manifests as dance, music, song and drama. Shri Krishna is the *nata-roopa* (the Hero or principal actor) of the entire Anand. The music is the form of His flute. The dance form is the frolic of the Raas. Music is present in every movement of Shri Krishna's feet.

Therefore, some people consider this world to be Sat (having a permanent existence) – including Swami Dayananadji for whom I have great respect – and consider a *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body; an individual soul) to be *sat-chit*, and the Paramatma to be *sat-chit-anand*. The interactive form of that Anand is Shri Krishna, and the *paaramaarthika roopa* (the form of the highest Truth) is the *niraakaara* (without form) Brahman.

Tade`jati taanaijati taddoore` tadavantike`.

(Ishavasya Upanishad 5)

Shankaracharyaji Maharaj has written a commentary on this, along with the *upaadhee* (superimposition connected to something), '*tade`jati kampate`* - the chin moves separately, the eyes move separately, and the waist moves separately as He dances; *tade`jati*.

Tannaijati – when He is passive it is *tanna e`jati*.

In the *nirupaadhee* (without any superimposition) form there is no movement.

Shri Krishna manifested, dancing, in this world. The world dances, therefore His dancing is known. If you visit Vrindavan at the time of *jhoolana* (the rainy season) you will see Behariji swinging on a swing. Banke` Behariji's form is unmoving – how can He swing on a swing? The priests erect a swing in front of Behariji. When the swing moves forward, it seems that Behariji is moving backwards, and when the swing moves backwards, Behariji seems to be swinging towards us. It is the swing that moves, but the illusion created is that of Behariji swinging back and forth.

Taddoore` - sometimes it seems Behariji has moved away from us.

Tadvantike` - sometimes it seems He is coming closer to us.

Tadantasya sarvasya - He is in the center, and the gopis are dancing in a circle round Him. He is at the center of all *vritti* (mental inclinations).

Tadu sarvasya baahyatah - He is everywhere.

In Vallabhacharyaji's words, He has the characteristic of having opposing qualities. He moves, He is unmoving; He is far, He is

near; He is outside, He is inside. How can one Paramatma have all kinds of contradictory actions?

It is because of the connection with the gopis.

What is a gopi?

‘Gopaayanti krishnam’ – a gopi is one who hides Shri Krishna. The people of the Vallabh Sampradaya (Shri Vallabhacharyaji’s school of thought) believe this to have four meanings. One is that a *gvaalina* (milkmaid) is called a gopi. The verses of the Vedas – the Shrutis and Richas – are called gopis. What do they do? They call out the names of Indra, Mitra and Varuna – ‘I am the one who establishes Indra, Mitra and Varuna!’ Actually, they establish the Paramatma. Therefore, in spite of being the wives of different *gopa* (cowherds), they are basically lovers of Shri Krishna. The *mantra* (group of words that evoke subtle powers) of the different Devtas (presiding deities; divine powers) establish the Devtas, but the names of the Devtas are actually names of the Paramatma. This becomes:

E`kam sad vipraa bahudhaa vadanti.

(Rig Veda 1. 164. 46)

(The Sat is one, but the Brahmins describe It in many ways.)

E`kam santam bahudhaa kalpayanti.

(Rig Veda 10. 114. 5)

(The Sat is one, but people imagine It in many ways)

The Paramatma is One, but people imagine Him in many forms.
He is One, but He is described in many ways.

E`kam vai sad vibabhoova sarvam.

(Rig Veda 8. 58. 2)

The Sat is One. It is He who manifests as this interactive world.
How does He become many?

*Anganaamaanganaamantare` maadhavaa maadhavam
maadhavam chaatare`naanganaa.*

(Krishnakarnamrita 2.35)

One gopi, one Krishna, one gopi. The *ghataakaara vritti* (the feeling of being the space in a separate person), a *mathaakara vritti* (the feeling of being the space in a temple), and the *vritti-rahita chaitanya* (the pure consciousness that has no inclinations) – all came together and focused on Shri Krishna.

This means, the Shruti, the *naadee* (nerves) – *ida, pingala, and sushumnaa* (the three main nerves of subtle energy) – the principal nerve is Radha. The Shruti nerves are the vrittis, and the Paramatma Shri Krishna – who is *rasa-roopa* (the form of sweetness incarnate) – is between the two; the '*rasyate` bhaktaih`* – the one whose sweetness is experienced by His bhaktas.

How?

The *vastu* (object; the Atma) is One in our vrittis.

Look, if you want to eat rice, cook it in plain water. If you want to eat kheera, cook it in milk and add sugar. Or, you can savor rice with buttermilk, or make a khichri by adding pulses. The rice is common, but the condiments added are different.

These gopis savor the sweetness of Shri Krishna with different kinds of feelings. Yashoda savors His sweetness as her son. Radha, as her Beloved. And the *gvaala-baala* (cowherd boys) savor His sweetness as their friend. Shri Krishna is one.

Raso vai sah. Rasam hye`vaayam labdhvaa aanadee bhavati.

(Taittareeya Upanishad 2. 7. 1)

His sweetness is described as ‘madhu’ (honey) in the Braharanyaka Upanishad.

Iyam prithivee sarve`shaam bhootaanaam madhu.

(This earth and all the beings on it are madhu.)
What is Bhagwan?

He is madhu. In Vraja (the region round Vrindavan) they don’t say ‘madhu’; they say ‘madhur’ (filled with sweetness). ‘*Madhu e`va madhuram*’ – as sweet as honey. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad calls that sweetness ‘madhu’, and the Taittareeya

Upanishad calls it 'rasa'. It is called 'bhoomaa' in the Chandogya Upanishad.

That *sukha-svaroopā* (form of unalloyed happiness) is Krishna. When He begins to do leela in the heart of a *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) in every external and internal vritti, it becomes '*rasaanaam samooḥo raasah*' – all the rasas combined become Raas. Raas is the name of the combination of all possible sweetness – *rasa e`va raasah*.

Now, see the cycle of words – *raasa, laasa, laasya*. Laasya means *nritya* (dancing). When the word 'laasya' went on a journey to foreign lands, it was transformed into 'dance'. '*Ralayorabhe`dah*', '*dalayorabhe`dah*' (the letters 'ra' and 'la', and 'da' and 'la' are mutually interchangeable). This Raas is a method for displaying our *aatma-rasa* (the sweetness of our Atma, which is not separate from the Brahman).

The *dharmaatmaa* (people who emphasize on Dharma) create rasa in *kriyaa* (action; rituals). Yogis create it in *e`kaagrataa* (focusing the mind). Vedanta experiences the rasa that is not subject to birth and cannot be qualified; and bhaktas savor it in many forms.

Do you know that the juice of an orange is water? So is the rasa in tamarind, lemon, mango, etc. It is the difference of the *upaadhee* (a superimposition connected to something) that makes water manifest in different flavors. Similarly, the upadhi

of *bhaava* (the feeling) manifests in the forms of different rasas. This is a method for defining it. If you tell me to do so, I will define it for you by the method of Vedanta some day. The *maayaa* (magical quality) of words is quite amazing!

Savoring the Paramatma with only Gnan, savoring Him with only *pre`ma* (love), or Yoga; but the Paramatma is One and has no separate divisions.

The first point is: the Sama Veda contains *sangeeta* (music) – *saama-geeta*. Then, there is the *upave`da* (the Veda attached to it), the Gandharva Veda, and its four sections. In this, the *vanshi* (flute) is a *praana-vaadya* (an instrument played with the breath). There is an instrument played by beating with sticks or the hand. There is the manjeera that are played by the clashing of two metal discs. The sarangi is played by scraping the bow across the strings, and there is the sitar that is played by twanging the strings with one hand while pressing on the bars above with the other hand.

The vanshi is called a '*sushir vaadya*' because it is played by using the breath of the musician. There are four points to note about Shri Krishna.

One is His *roopa-maadhuree* (the sweetness of His form). The Brahman cannot attract anyone towards Itself. The Vedantis keep praising the Brahman to arouse people's interest in It, but the Brahman does nothing to draw people towards Itself.

Shri Krishna dances, sings, plays an instrument, He cries, He steals things. He flirts, throws pebbles at the gopis, and catches their garments to attract their attention. It is the special quality of the *saguna* (with attributes) Ishwara that He draws even people who are indifferent to Him towards Himself!

The greatest example of this is Kubja. By caste, Kubja was a low-caste woman who applied perfumed oils to Kansa's body. Kansa's wives allowed her to do so, because she was a hunchback. There was nobody in the world who cared about Kubja. Krishna said, 'O beautiful lady! Nobody in Vraja is as beautiful as you!' At first Kubja could not believe that Shri Krishna was addressing her. He called out again.

'Oh! He is calling me beautiful!'

Now, just see; there was no *bhaavana* (feeling of love) in Kubja for Shri Krishna. She had made no effort for spiritual progress. She had not resolved to obtain Him. There was no goal in her life. Shri Krishna draws even such a person to Himself! This is a message for all the downfallen and downtrodden people in this world. It reassures us that Shri Krishna is ready to draw the least among us to Himself!

Only people who have the *saadhana chatushtaya* will apply Vedanta. Sadhan chatushtaya means, having acquired the qualifications of *viveka* (discrimination between the eternal and the transient), *vairagya* (detachment from worldly

considerations), *shat-sampatti* (the six attributes of mental and physical self-restraint, disinterest in the interactive world, stoic endurance, faith, and resolving of all doubts), and *mumukshaa* (a desire to be liberated from the cycle of rebirth). Here, however, Shri Krishna comes and tells even people who sit complaisantly at home, ‘Come; I have come to lift you up.’

In the episode of the Raas Leela we can consider the rustic gopis to be the Shrutis and Richas of the Vedas. Or, we can consider them to be mental inclinations, or nerves of our body. I am entranced when I see the brilliance, the dexterity and logic and poetic genius of the author who has described this with such grace and beauty.

The musical cadences of Sanskrit verse describe how Shri Krishna’s feet step to the rhythm, the graceful gestures of His hands, His enchanting smiles, the way his eyebrows twitch, and his hips swing. He is dancing, isn’t He?

In Gujarat there is a folk dance called the *garbaa-raasa*. It is the same. Raas means, Raas Leela. Narsingh Mehta had a vision of this. He saw Shri Krishna’s ear rings touch His cheeks as they swayed when He danced. He saw the fluttering of the gopis’s garments.

This is clearly to be seen in the Kena Upanishad.

‘Taddha vanam naama,’ is written in the last chapter. ‘What is the Brahman?’ It is a *vana* (forest). Vana means Vrindavan (a forest of tulsi shrubs). Just as lightening flashes among clouds, the shloka says, *‘me`ghachakrai virajuh’*. *‘Dhyaayateeva le`laayateeva (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4. 3. 7)’* – this is not *dhyaana* (meditation); it is like restlessness. The three kinds of *upaasanaa* (loving worship) described in the Kena Upanishad are the *aadhidaivika* (pertaining to the divine), *aadhibhautika* (pertaining to this world), and *aadhyaatmika* (pertaining to the spiritual); and these are depicted in the Raas Leela.

Now, we will stop talking about Shri Krishna’s leelas, else it will become too lengthy.

Question: Bhagwan has come in so many Avatars, and there will be many more in future. Up to the Vaman Avatar there was a specific purpose for each Avatar, and He disappeared as soon as the purpose was achieved.

In the Avatars after that, Bhagwan stayed on earth doing *leelaa* (divine play) and *charita* (depicting characteristics). Bhagwan is all-powerful. That being the case, why didn't He accomplish His purpose without doing leelas and charita? Rama-charita is *anukaraneeya* (exemplary; worthy of following), but Krishna-charita cannot be considered an example! The Gnan of the *shoonya* (nothing; a vacuum) of Buddha cannot be called Vedic. I am puzzled by this.

Answer: You see, it is like this – the Jains do not believe in the Ishwara. Their principle doesn't accept five things: the Ishwara, the Vedas, the Brahmins, *homa* (offering oblations into the sacred fire), and *snaana* (that bathing in a holy river purifies a person spiritually). Since they don't have any Avatar there is no question of the Ishwara's Avatars. The *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body; an individual soul) is uplifted – '*utkramishye`ta e`vam baavaad iti audulomih* (Brahma Sutra 1. 4. 21)'. The jeeva rises gradually as it gets purified. Mahavir, Parashvanath, Neminath

and others are not Avatars of the Ishwara; they are jeevas who became completely pure and attained their respective forms.

The books based on the Puranas (ancient books on Indian mythology) describe the Avatars of the Ishwara. If the Atma and the Paramatma are one, and the jeeva takes birth, why won't the Ishwara come in an Avatar?

See it this way: the Ishwara is *niraakaara* (formless). Very well; what is the Atma? Is it nirakara or is it *saakaara* (with form)? The Paramatma is nirakara and the Atma is also nirakara. The Atma gets a birth as per the deeds of the previous life, and the Ishwara takes a birth out of compassion for the people. If the Ishwara has no *karunaa* (compassion) – if He does only *nyaaya* (justice) – what is the use of such an Ishwara? Even Dharma Raj (the presiding deity of Death) gives justice. The one who shows mercy is the Ishwara. When the Ishwara sees that the jeevas are very unhappy in this world, He

Paritraanaaya saadhunaam vinaashaaya cha dushkritaam,

(Gita 4. 8)

(I manifest to liberate the good and destroy the wicked.)

Ajaayamaano bahudhaa vijaayate`. Jaayamaanah shre`yaan bhavati.

(All are divine by birth, and before birth. The dirt of the sansara cannot touch you unless you get immersed in it.)

He is the most superior from the time He takes birth.

Thus, Bhagwan's leela is done according to the requirement. He wants to uphold the *prithivee* (Earth) and frolic in water; meaning, display love and also purify water. The main object of the Varaha Avatar was to show His great love.

Look at it this way: the nose of Varaha Bhagwan is the *aadhyaatma* (spiritual) form, His Varaha form is *aadhidaivika* (divine), and the prithivi is the *aadhibhautika* (composed of the five elements) form. The prithivi, *gandha* (fragrance) and *naasikaa* (nose), and their *adhidaiva* (the Devta; the Ishwara), are depicted in this. The people who know do *vichaara* (give deep thought) on this.

Bhagwan Ramachandra is the *pradhaana* (principal), and He is a suitable role model for people. Dharma is for doing, and leela is for meditating on. It helps *bhaavanaa* (the feeling of love). *Vignaana* (science) is for making changes in matter, *kalaa* (art) is for imitating, and Gnan is to help us know the *svaroopa* (essence; true form) of an object. Dharma helps us to attain the desired state. This is Rama-Krishna.

You refer to Buddha being *shoonyavaadee* (the principle that shoonya – vacuum – is the ultimate reality). For that matter,

the Upanishads also say that shoonya is one of the names of the Brahman.

You recite the Vishnu Sahasranama (the thousand names of Bhagwan Vishnu). You are a great *aastika* (one who believes in Bhagwan). You are Vedic (believer of the Vedas). Doesn't the name '*eeshoneesha*' come in the Vishnu Sahasranama? The Ishwara exists; '*eesha*' is one of Vishnu Bhagwan's names. Another name of His is '*aneesha*' – meaning, one who has no Ishwara. What does aneesha means? '*Naasti eesho yasya*' – one who has no Ishwara! That means, the Ishwara does not have any Ishwara. If the Ishwara had an Ishwara, that Ishwara would also have an Ishwara, and that Ishwara would also have an Ishwara – that would result in uncertainty and chaos.

Therefore, the Ishwara is one who has no Ishwara above Him; He is the highest and the greatest, and therefore He has no higher Ishwara!

That being the case, doesn't the Ishwara become a *naastika* (atheist; one who does not believe in a higher power)? Oh, my brother, the Ishwara is our Ishwara! He does not believe in any other Ishwara. Thus, when He comes in a *dharma-avataara* – an Avatar to depict Dharma – He comes as Rama.

When there is a *pre`ma-avataara* (an Avatar to depict pure love), He comes as Krishna. But what when there is a *nireeshvara-avataara* (an Avatar where there is no Ishwara)?

These are styles and skills that come in a stream, to reveal the *svaroopa* (essence; true form) of the Ishwara.

Yadaa yadaa hi dharmasya glaanirbhavati bhaarata,

(Gita 4. 7)

(Whenever Dharma wanes and adharma increases, I take an Avatar.)

When *hinsaa* (violence) crept into the Yagna (a ritual in which ablutions are offered into the sacred fire) the Ishwara's special power manifested as Buddha to remove it. Where is the flaw in this? And, if there is any *grantha* (book), *pantha* (religious sect), or Acharya (Teacher) that supports hinsa, the Ishwara will also refute them, because He is the one who sustains the essence of the Yagna. Why wouldn't He take the Avatar of the Buddha?

Therefore, if you believe in the Ishwara's Avatars you should also accept the Buddha Avatar. You are willing to accept a boar as an Avatar and unwilling to accept Buddha as an Avatar?

The *adviteeya* (non-dual) Brahman has neither *parichhinnataa* (separateness; fragmentation) nor the actions of our Avatars. When we sit in the *sansaara* (interactive world) we accept the forms of Bhagwan that bestow *kalyaana* (liberation from the cycle of rebirth) to this sansara. From the viewpoint of the Ishwara, there is no Avatar; the Avatar is from the viewpoint of

the *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body; an individual), and it is for the kalyan of the jeeva.

: 18 :

Question: In the third chapter of the Gita Arjuna asked Shri Krishna:

*Atha ke`na prayuktoyam paapam charati purushah,
anichhannapi vaarshne`ya balaadive niyojitah.*

(3. 36)

(O Krishna! What is it that impels a human being into violence and other wrong actions in spite of not wanting to do wrong?)

The Taittareeya Upanishad has this question:

Kimaham saadhu naakaravam, kimaham paapamakaravamiti.

(2. 9. 1)

(The spiritual seeker asks, 'What are the things I should not do, which become a paapa?' A realized person is free to do anything without incurring sin.)

Such questions always crop up in our life, and sometimes a feeling of being very small comes into the mind. The *mana* (emotional mind) starts believing itself to be as lowly as Duryodhana.

Jaanaami dharmam na cha me`pravrittih.

The *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) believes himself to be a lowly person. What should he do to free himself from this?

Answer: Pay attention to the answer Shri Krishna has given to Arjuna's question, '*Ke`na prayuktoyam paapam charati.*'

*'Kaama e`sha krodha e`sha rajogunasamudbhavah,
mahaashano mahapaapmaa viddhye`namiha vairinam.*

(Gita 3. 37)

(The desire that is born from Rajo guna – the mixed tendency that creates agitation and restlessness – is the cause of anger. It is never satisfied; it always wants more. It is a great sinner, so know it to be your enemy.)

Kaama (desire) and *krodha* (anger) are the roots of *paapa* (sinful actions). '*Mahaashano mahapaapmaa viddhaye`namiha vairinam*' – you have two enemies. They are kama and krodha. Basically they are one, but in interaction they are two. '*E`namiha vairinam*' – and, they cover our Gnan like a blanket, in gross and subtle forms.

*Dhoomē`naavrite`vanhiryathaadarsho male`na cha,
yatholbe`naavrito garbhastathaa te`ne`damaavritam.*

(3. 38)

(Just as fire is hidden by smoke, and a mirror is hidden by dust, and a fetus is hidden by the placenta, our Gnan is covered and hidden by kama.)

The first example of fire being hidden by smoke is *saattvika* (belonging to the Sattva guna that bestows peace and good thoughts). The second example, of a mirror being hidden by dust, is *raajasika* (belonging to Rajo guna, the mixed tendency that bestows restlessness and agitation), and the third example, of a baby covered by the placenta is *tamogunee* (belonging to Tamo guna, the lowly tendency that bestows sloth and deluded thinking). These are the *aavarana* (coverings that hide); they are veils that hide the Truth. Bhagwan exposed them completely. He gave a clear picture of them. Just like the Police give a full description of a criminal, Bhagwan described these villains.

‘I will tell you where they live,’ He said.

Indriyaani mano buddhirasyaadhishtaanamuchyate`.

(3. 40)

Kama and krodha abide in the senses, the mana, and the *buddhi* (intellect). They use these to delude you by placing a covering over your Gnan.

It is like having an enemy who lives in your stables. He feeds your horses well to make them strong. He weakens the reins

with which they are controlled, and he bribes the driver of your chariot. This is how your enemy gains control over your *indriyaani* (the senses), the horses, and '*indriyaani hayaanaahuh* (*Katha Upanishad* 1. 3. 4)', and '*mana pragrahame`va cha*' – the mind is the reins, and '*buddhim tu saarathim viddhi*' – the buddhi is the driver.

This is where kama stays. It expands when fulfilled, and burns when unfulfilled. Kama expands and krodha burns. The root is the same. Kama heats up at times and cools down at times. That means, it is cough at times, and *pitta* (bile) at times. Cough is like desire and pitta is like anger. Recognize them, and then make an effort to overcome them. '*Prajahihi*' means, get rid of them, and '*jahi shatrum mahaabahao*' (3.41)' means, overcome your enemies.

*Tasmaattvamindriyaanyaadaau niyamyā bharatarshabha,
paapmaanāṁ prajāhi hye`nam gnaānavignaānānaashanam.*

(3. 41)

(Therefore, O Arjuna, first gain control over your senses, and destroy the sinner Kama that destroys your Gnan and vighnan, meaning, applied Gnan.)

'Prajahi' means, control your senses and give up kama.

What is '*Tasmande`vam vidittvainaṁ*'?

Jahi shatrum mahaabaaho kaamaroopam duraa sadam.

(3. 43)

(Thus, destroy this enemy that comes in the form of kama.)

‘Jahi’ means, destroy, kill, let go, discard, annihilate.

Bhagwan gave this teaching first, for a *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) to conquer the dormant desire and anger in his heart. ‘*Ke`na prayuktoyam*’ – no; don’t be *prayukta* (attached to them) at all. Give them up completely. Destroy them.

Do *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress), my brother. Make an effort to keep kama and krodha under control.

What is said in the Taittareeya Upanishad are the words of a *jeevana-mukta purusha* (a person who has become free of his identification with his body).

Kimaham saadhu na karavam kimaham paapamakaravam.
(*Taittareeya Upanishad 2. 9. 1*)

A Tattvagna (enlightened person) never has the regret, ‘Why didn’t I do *punya* (good deeds that give spiritual merit)? Why did I do *paapa* (sinful deeds)?’ He is equally serene about doing

or not doing paapa-punya. This is a description of his mental equilibrium.

Furthermore, if you have a feeling of inferiority because of your kama-krodha, meditate on the Paramatma. You are an *ansha* (part) of the Paramatma. You are His bhakta, and you are ruled by Him. Meditate on your *maalika* (Master), on your *aadhaara* (support), your *antaryaamee* (the one in your heart), your *brahmabhaava* (the feeling that you are the Brahman). Your regrets will not remain, nor will your kama-krodha remain.

There is nothing illogical about this. Get rid of the feeling of inferiority by doing *vichaara* (giving profound thought) of the whole. You are not *laghu* (small; light); you are *guru* (heavy; great).

A man came to Maharajji and said, 'Please make me your *che`laa* (disciple).'

'All right; I accept you as my disciple.'

'What should I do now?'

'Bring firewood. Draw water from the well and fill all the pots. Then go and get *bhikshaa* (begged food) for both of us to eat.'

The disciple did everything he was told. In the evening he asked, 'Maharaj, I am doing all the work. Why don't you do

anything? You should help in all the tasks of getting wood, filling water and getting bhiksha.'

'My brother, I am the Guru. You are the chela. The chela has to do all the work; the Guru does nothing.'

'In that case, Maharaj, I don't want to be a chela. Please make me a Guru.'

Therefore, my brother, don't be laghu – don't get swept away by every wind that blows. Be like a rock, unmoving. Be so stable that neither the waves of the incoming tide, nor the lashings of a storm can shake you. Understand your *svaroopa* (essence; true form) and become *sthira* (absolutely unshakeable). There is no cause for fear.

Question: Swamiji, how can we inculcate Dharma and Bhakti in our professional life? You are aware of how dishonesty and corruption have become part of every profession. Under the circumstances, how can we protect our integrity?

Answer: Professional life is what it is. It is the *lobha* (greed) in your *mana* (emotional mind) that is the weakness that keeps you in the position you are in. Therefore, if you write something in the Register, keep a separate sheet of paper with you. Write Bhagwan's name on it once before writing one line in the Register. This way you will be reminded repeatedly about Bhagwan, and your Atmabal (inner strength; the strength of the Atma) will continue to grow. When your Atmabal increases, the *daivee sampadaa* (wealth of good tendencies) will increase automatically in your life.

Tell me something. You are compelled to submit to *be`eemaanee* (dishonesty) at the office, but do you do anything dishonest after leaving the office? Do you tell falsehood to your wife or not? Do you indulge in idle gossip with your friends or not?

I give you leave to do whatever your boss tells you during the hours you spend at the office, but don't do anything dishonest

during the remaining hours. I tell you with full responsibility that dishonesty will leave you. Dishonesty is not a *dosha* (fault; flaw) of the profession; it is a weakness of the mana.

: 20 :

Question: Do the *graha* (planets) and *nakshatra* (heavenly bodies) really have an effect on our work?

Answer: Look, my brother, I can tell you which planet is in which position by doing some calculations. These days science has made it possible to see stars and their movements in any planetariums in any of the big cities in India.

We can calculate the movements of Guru (Jupiter), Shukra (Venus) and other planets, and their effect on the earth's attraction-repulsion.

There are three methods in astrology – the Surya Siddhanta, the Brahma Siddhanta, and the Vasishta Siddhanta. There are many ancient books on mathematics, astrology, and astronomy. However, neither calculations, nor science, can tell us about the effect of planets on a human being.

Great efforts have been made in this field. My own grandfather and great-grandfather were astrologers. I am not an astrologer. It takes eight years for the rays of Shanishchara (Saturn) to reach our Earth, because it is so far away. If Saturn were to be destroyed today, we would not know of it till after eight years, because the rays would keep coming.

Neither calculations nor computers can tell us about how planets affect humans.

Then, how is it explained?

It is like a newly qualified doctor trying a medicine on a hundred patients. He will reject it if a large per cent of the patients die or worsen. He will say it is effective if seventy per cent of patients are cured. Astrology is based on the majority of predictions coming true, and the calculations made by astrologers are a science.

Even in this, the Greek astrologers have a different position. They believe that Greek astrology has spread all over the world, and our astrologers believe that it is the Indian astrology that has spread all over the world. However, our calculations have not yet established the effect of planetary movements on people, so what am I to say about Greek calculations?

If you wish to undertake some work, to progress, don't look at the heavens as you walk! Keep your feet on the ground and look at the ground as you walk. There is no cause for you to become *paraadheena* (dependent on any other). If you have zeal and courage in your heart, the planets can do you no harm. Take the *aashraya* (shelter; refuge) of the Ishwara, and continue to do your duty.

If any astrologer is present, and disapproves of what I have said, I am willing to take back my words! Even in Parliament, the Members of Parliament say what they want to say and then take back their words, so I can do the same, can't I?

Question: How can *guru-kripaa* (the Grace of the Guru), and *shishya-bhaava* (the faith of a disciple) be obtained?

Answer: Take this matter seriously. There is an eternal difference of opinion between the Guru and the *shishya* (disciple).

The shishya says, 'Maharaj, nothing can be achieved by my efforts. Everything is achieved by your *kripaa* (Grace).'

He is right, because if he were to say that the achievement was due to his own efforts, it would result in his becoming proud of himself.

The Guru says, 'No, my son! It was your own sincere effort that brought you success. My Grace had nothing to do with it.'

He is right, because if the Guru was to accept that the disciple succeeded because of his Grace, he would be an *abhimaanee* (one who is proud of himself).

This is why the Guru – who has no *abhimaana* (vanity) – says, 'It was due to your own efforts', and the disciple – who has no *abhimān* – says, 'It was due to your Grace'. It is very good that these feelings prevail.

The Kashmiri Shaivas and the Tantriks are of the opinion that when the shishya's *shraddha* (faith with reverence) and the Guru's Kripa are equally strong – when *shraddha* and *anugraha* (Grace) come together irrevocably – the *shakti* (power) awakens.

Question: The greatest *kalyaana* (benefit; liberation) for a human being is to obtain *jeevana-mukti* (become free of the identification with the body) in this very life.

If Sanyas (becoming a Monk) and living in solitude are not essential for jeevan-mukti, why do people take the vows of renunciation? And, why do they go to a lonely place, like a forest, to live in solitude?

Answer: Different people have different opinions about the highest benefit – kalyan – a person can get in life. Some people believe it lies in obtaining jeevan-mukti, and some believe it is in obtaining the Ishwara's *kripaa* (Grace). Some believe that obtaining great wealth or great *bhoga* (sensual pleasures) is the greatest benefit in a person's life.

If you go to America and preach that the greatest good fortune a person can get is Mukti (liberation from the cycle of rebirth) you will get disciples, but they will not be people who truly seek either Mukti or jeevan-mukti! They will give you some dollars as a fee and then wander off because they want neither the Mukti nor the jeevan-mukti you speak of.

Therefore it is not proper to think that jeevan-mukti – or Mukti – is the goal of all people. Some people desire wealth, some

want to do Dharma, some want bhoga, and some aspire to Mukti. People are of different kinds. Only the people who are committed to their separate religious faiths say that every person wants only Mukti.

I can convince you logically that every person seeks Mukti, and you will accept what I say, but this will not filter into your life. You will listen to spiritual discourses but work for worldly gain. If you are in America your focus will be materialistic. If you are in Paris your focus will be worldly pleasures. If you are in London your focus will be work, and if you are in India – please don't take offence at what I say – your focus will be to be lazy! In fact, the best thing is if you don't have to do any work at all!

There are four *purushaarthas* (principal goals for a human) of a *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body; an individual soul). Artha: wealth, which stays outside the body. Bhoga: worldly pleasures that stays in the *mana* (emotional mind). Dharma: doing good deeds, which stays in the *buddhi* (intellect); and Mukti – or Moksha – which is the *svaroopa* (essence; true form) of the Atma.

When Sadhus tell people that what they actually want is Mukti, it is like the political leaders who tell the crowds, 'These are the things you want and need.' The public cries out, 'Yes! Yes! These are what we want and need!' They get carried away by the rhetoric and vote for the candidate. Similarly, when a

person understands that what he wants is Mukti, he becomes a *che`laa* (disciple) of some Babaji (Sadhu).

Thus, by the Grace of the Ishwara, it is a matter of one *sampradaya* (religious tradition) – the Mukti Sampradaya – that everybody wants Mukti. Somebody wants *sukha* (happiness and contentment) in this life. The ultimate goal of all is when a person gets *vairagya* (detachment from worldly considerations) logically and rationally, about these matters. Then, it becomes apparent that everybody wants to be free of all suffering and bondage.

Thus, of the four Purusharthas, one is the external Artha, then the internal Dharma, then the intellectual Dharma, and ultimately, obtaining the Mukti that is the true form of one's own Self.

To obtain Mukti, it is necessary for the mind to be focused on the goal. It is also necessary for the aspirant to do *vichaara* (think deeply). If there is no vichar, and no *e`kaagrataa* (concentrated thought), then, '*drishyate` tvagrayaa buddhyaa sookshmayaa sookshmadarshibhih.*'

The intellect has to be *sookshma* (subtle; able to penetrate) to attain Mukti, because Mukti is subtle. And, the mind has to be focused. A human being should make it his goal to obtain whatever is useful for obtaining that focused and subtle intellect.

*Upah vai girinaam sangame` cha nadeenaam dhiyaa vipro
ajaayata.*

Tattvagnan (Gnan about the essence of the non-dual Brahman that is the substratum of all that exists) is obtained in the high mountains, and at the confluence of rivers, so a *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) should do whatever is necessary to obtain Tattvagnan.

If someone can make his *chitta* (mental inclinations) *e`kaagra* (focused on one point) and his *buddhi sookshma*, and if *pavitrataa* (purity according to the Shastras, the ancient books on religion) comes into his life, he is also a Sanyasi at heart. Shankaracharyaji has described such a man in several places. There is no need for such a man to wear saffron robes, or shave his head.

Aren't there Grishastha (married householders) who are also Tattvagnanis? Rama, Janak, Krishna and Ashvapati are shining examples. Very well; did Yagyavalkya get Gnan while he was a Grihastha or did he get it after taking Sanyas? Oh, he obtained Gnan when he was a Grihastha. It was after he got enlightenment that he wanted divide his worldly possessions between his two wives before taking the vows of renunciation.

Being a Sanyasi means that the mind should be focused, and the intellect should be capable of penetrating subtle truths. It should not be turned outwards and focused on the interactive

world. It should be turned towards the Atma. This is what you should strive for.

Sanyas is not taken because of someone's preaching. There is a Sanskrit book called, 'Jeevan Mukti' written by Vidyanaraya Swami. He wrote it after writing the 'Panchadashi'. In it, he has explained why Sanyasis have a *danda* (stout wooden staff). The purpose is to protect themselves from being attacked by an angry bull or bitten by a dog – *pashavaabhyupadravanivaaranaaya*.

Then, what is the purpose of Sanyas? It is to do *aatma-chintana* (think about the Atma) without having to worry about making arrangements for his livelihood. A Sanyasi eats begged food. Sanyas is not meant for taking *chanda* (subscriptions) for community worship. It is for keeping the mind focused on the Atma, and meditating on the pure. Sanyas is the fourth Ashram (stage of life), and *aashrama* means, *maaryaadite shrama* – all the actions of a Sanyasi are within a framework of what is right and proper for a Sanyasi.

Eeshadarthe` kriyaayoge` maryaadaabhidhau cha yah.

This, Ashram means, where there is a *maryaada* (framework of rules) of *shrama* (activity; work). A Brahmachari (celibate student) should serve his Guru, a Grihastha should serve his parents, a Vanaprastha (middle-aged person who retires from worldly activity to develop spirituality) should do *tapasyaa*

(asceticism; austerities), and a Sanyasi should live without accumulating possessions.

There is no scope for any *adrishya fala* (unseen fruit) in Vedanta that a man becomes a Sanyasi to get Swarga (Heaven) after death. Sanyas is taken to enable the person to devote himself entirely to doing chintan (meditation), develop a single-minded focus, and establish himself firmly in his *nishtha* (staunch faith).

Question: I am unable to give *sveekriti* (acceptance) the Ishwara in all situations. Karma Yoga (work done as worship) is not possible without accepting the Ishwara. That being the case, what can I do for *antahkarana-shuddhi* (purifying the fourfold mind, or subtle body, composed of the *mana* = emotional mind, *buddhi* = intellect, *chitta* = mental inclinations, and *ahankaara* = the subtle pride of individuality)?

Answer: Situations keep changing. It is not possible to hold on to any one situation, or even remember them all. However, you should pay attention to the One who remains the same in all the changing situations – the One who saw poverty and also saw wealth; saw sorrow and also happiness; saw *paapa* (sin) and also *punya* (good deeds that give spiritual merit).

You see, there is no rule that *antahkarana-shuddhi* is possible only if a person believes in the Ishwara. *Antahkarana-shuddhi* is done by both the Jains and the Buddhists. (The Jain and Buddhist philosophies do not believe in the Ishwara.) In fact, those who do not believe in the Ishwara put in a greater effort for *antahkarana-shuddhi*! This is because they are responsible for the cleansing of their own *antahkaranas*. If they had an Ishwara, they could have left some of this work to Him! Thus, those who don't believe in the Ishwara are more alert about

their *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress) for Samadhi and antahkarana-shuddhi.

You must be aware of your *paraadheenataa* (being dependent on others) in order to accept the Ishwara, and you must have *pre`ma* (pure love) to get *smriti* (repeated remembering) of the Ishwara. Accepting the Ishwara is one thing, and having love for Him is another thing. *Sveekaara* (acceptance; belief) of the Ishwara comes gradually along with the *sanskaara* (subtle subconscious impressions). Nobody can suddenly accept the Ishwara by his using his own brains; *shraddhaa* (faith) is needed.

Thus, *smarana* (remembering) is done by prema, and *sveekriti* (acceptance) is done by *abhyaasa* (practice; repetition). How can a person accept the Ishwara if no sanskaras have been implanted in his mind? So, associate with the bhaktas who have faith, and love for Bhagwan. You will be able to accept that Bhagwan exists. And, if you do His bhakti, you will be able to remember Him repeatedly.

The question indicates that the *buddhi* (intellect) is not able to accept the existence of the Ishwara – or, it cannot accept Him in every situation. Then, if there is a need in you to believe in Him, you should keep the company of His bhaktas. If you feel no need for having faith in the Ishwara you can stay in peace within yourself. There are many *pantha* (religious groups) – like

the Gorakhpantis – who believe in the practice of Yogic exercises that lead to Samadhi. Jains and Buddhists attain Samadhi, but they don't accept the existence of the Ishwara. There is no need to be distressed about them. Walk on the path of a search that will take you to a stage where you will see for yourself, whether the Ishwara exists or not. Or else, associate with bhaktas, and accept Him.

There are many ways of achieving antahkarana-shuddhi. *Shuddha* (pure, according to the ancient books on religion) *bhojana* (food; intake), *shuddha karma* (actions), *shuddha bhaava* (feelings), *shuddha vichaara* (thoughts), *shuddha sthiti* (state) etc are methods for purifying the antahkarana.

Shuddha chintana (meditating on the pure) means, when thinking is free of *maayaa* (illusions, delusions, or personal considerations), *chhayaa* (the shadow of other influences), *prakriti* (the innate nature of a person), *guna* (the three tendencies that influence people). These are, Sattva guna (the lofty tendency that gives good thoughts and peace), the Rajo guna (that gives restlessness and strong passions) and Tamo guna (that gives delusion and sloth), *de'sha* (the influence of the place), *kaala* (times) *vastu* (objects that effect your thoughts). And, meditating on that pure vastu (the Atma; the Brahman) that is free of all these influences is antahkarana-shuddhi.

If the Ishwara is occasionally put aside during worldly interaction, it is not an *aparaadha* (offence). Nobody goes to Narak (Hell) for not chanting the name of Rama; he goes to Narak for doing *paapa* (sinful acts). So, take a look at yourself. A person who has taken the *yagnopaveeta* (sacred thread) will go to Narak if he does not do the daily ritual of Sandhya Vandan, but he won't go to Narak for not taking Bhagwan's name. The name of Rama is taken at the wish of the individual, and bhakti is also the choice of the individual. Do these if you want, or don't do them if you don't want.

Narak is the punishment for doing things that are forbidden, like stealing, being unfaithful, or any immoral or unethical act. Look for yourself to see how large your sweekriti is! You may not accept the Ishwara, but you lead a principled life. Let your heart be filled with love – not selective love for a chosen few, but a universal benevolence. It is the nature of the sun to spread light. It is the nature of the moon to spread moonlight. It is the nature of water to be cool. Similarly, your nature should be such that whoever comes into your contact should be filled with your love.

Stand up respectfully to welcome your visitor. Bend your head with humility. Fold your hands to show regard. Offer him the better chair and talk smilingly. The Ishwara meets you every moment, whether you accept Him or not, so spread peace and

joyfulness in your interaction. I don't know whether the purport of your question has been answered or not.

Question: How is *antahkarana-shuddhi* (purifying the fourfold mind, or subtle body, composed of the *mana* = emotional mind, *buddhi* = intellect, *chitta* = mental inclinations, and *ahankaara* = the subtle ego of individuality) achieved, without the Ishwara?

Answer: Some of our own philosophies, like *yagna-yaaga* (rituals where oblations are offered to the sacred fire) are undertaken for *antahkarana-shuddhi*, without accepting the Ishwara. They don't even believe that it is the Ishwara who gives the fruits of our actions. There is no reason for fear in any of our six *aastika* (believers of the Ishwara) Darshans (schools of thought). In the earlier books of the Poorva Mimansa philosophy – called the Jarath or Jaranmimansa – they do not accept that Devtas (presiding deities; divine powers) have faces. They don't believe in doing *poojaa* (ritual worship), offering *bhoga* (food), *tripti* (satisfying the Devtas), or *prasannataa* (the Devtas being pleased with us). They don't even accept *varadaana* (boons granted by Devtas).

The only thing is: don't cause discomfort to anyone. If you take one vow – that you will never knowingly be the cause of anyone's suffering – the Ishwara will be pleased. He will come to you, Himself. He will offer you whatever you want. Never hurt anyone knowingly.

Babajis (Sadhus) don't say this. They say, 'What is life without the Ishwara?' It is true that the body is nothing without earth (the clay it is made of); it is nothing without water. What is the *jeevaatmaa* (the Atma attached to a body; an individual soul) without *che`tana* (consciousness)? All this is true, but just be careful in your interaction, that you never knowingly inflict pain. It is ironic that we inflict more pain on these we love the most, than on anyone else. We want to see them as we want them to be, and we want them to do what we want. Our wish is to satisfy our own preferences. We want them to continue doing what satisfies us. We want them to be governed by us. This is a great *dosha* (fault) in *raaga* (emotional attachment).

Question: How can a person progress in life with a balance of *adhyaatma* (spirituality) and *vignaana* (science)?

Answer: The areas of these two are separate. The subject of vignan is to calculate, to measure, and to experiment. Science calculates the methods and intricacies of changes, transformations, and reactions. And, there is an *anusanthaana* (specific method) in it. Calculating and experimenting are the two subjects of vignan.

Adhyatma is not a matter of science. For example, the object of the eyes is to see the appearance, and the object of the nose is to smell. Don't try to see with the nose and smell with the eyes! The purpose of vignan is to know and understand the matter of the external world, adapt it, and make it useful.

See the department of Atmagnan (Gnan about the Atma that is not separate from the non-dual Brahman that is the substratum of all that exists) – it is quite different. If I know that Jitubhai is a good man, I will feel like sitting with him and talking to him. If I know that I am a good person, I will feel like spending time with myself.

By getting the Gnan of the Atma there is nothing you have to leave and nothing you have to get. It is a subject of vignan

when you have to leave something after obtaining its knowledge. And, when the knowledge of something leads you to holding on to it, it is also a matter of *vignan*. If you know something to be bad you will let it go. If you know your Self, you will neither have to hold on to it, nor will you have to let it go. Nobody can let go of their Self; there is no need to keep hold on your Self; your Self just is.

Thus, Atma-*vignan* (the science or the Atma) is such that it can't be obtained in a laboratory, or understood by intensive calculations. And *vignan* is that, in which new aspects and mathematical calculations will be discovered, more and more subtleties and reactions of substances will come to light, and chemical experiments lead to new discoveries. There is great scope for progress in *vignan*, but Atma-*vignan* is something that gives you *shaanti* (inner peace), and in which there is no question of discarding or accepting.

Now, the meaning of the word *aadhyaatmika* (spiritual; metaphysical) is different. That, which is within our own gross physical body is called *adhyatma*. *Aatmani iti adhyaatmam*. For example, our *kaama* (desire; lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (deluded thinking), *shaanti* (inner peace), *daanti* (restrain of the senses), *vishraama* (mental repose), *klaanti* (irritation), *bhraanti* (mistaken understanding), etc are all *adhyatma*. These remain within the body.

Then, what is needed to live in this world is not Atmagnan, but adhyatmagnan (Gnan about the working of the mind). It is like a man driving a car without knowing how the engine functions. If there is some impurity in the petrol and the engine stops, he has to either stand beside the car to ask for someone to help him, or he has to go to look for a mechanic who can repair the fault. However, if he has Gnan about the working of the engine, he can locate the fault and set it right himself.

We don't know how our *mana* (emotional mind) works, or how the rays of light enter our eyes enabling us to see. The tape recorder teaches us how the ear functions. It plays, and the sound is recorded in our mind. Our speech is like a loudspeaker uttering words. The eye is like binoculars or a microscope that shows us things.

What is the connection of the legs with our 'I' that they walk where we want to go? How is the hand connected to our 'I' that it picks up what we want? Why does the nose absorb only the smell? In the *adhyatma-vidyaa* (the science of adhyatma) it is necessary to do *vichaara* (think deeply) about these things.

Gandha (smell) is a *guna* (quality), and the nose catches it. And, the *upaadaana* (raw material) of both is the *prithivee* - the earth that has the *gandha tanmaatras* (the subtle form of the matter that creates and absorbs smell). And, this is connected to our Aham ('I'), and is directed by us.

That means, you become the Raja of this body. A man is the Master of the car if he knows how its every component functions; otherwise, he is its servant. He is helpless when it stops. He has to push it to the side of the road, go for help, and pay to be able to use it again. You are, thus, sometimes the Master and sometimes the servant of the car.

Similarly, to be the Master of your body you need to have an understanding of the working of its every component. You need to understand how the *mana* works, how the *Atma* and the *mana* are linked, and how the *mana* directs the *indriya* (five sense organs and five organs of action). You have to understand which *tanmaatras* (subtle form of matter) is in which sense organ, and which element it is connected to. You have to understand which action is prompted by what.

Adhidaiva (pertaining to the divine) is the subject of *shraddha* (faith) and *bhakti*. *Adhyatma* is investigating the *antahkarana* (fourfold mind or subtle body, composed of the *mana* = emotional mind, *buddhi* = intellect, *chitta* = mental inclinations, and *ahankaara* = subtle pride of individuality). And, the *Atmagnan* of Vedanta is quite separate.

Kalaa (skill; artistry) is meant to be copied. An artist paints a peacock, a beautiful tree, and other scenes. That is *kalaa*. And *vignana* is when you induce changes, as in plants, create hybrids, bonsai, etc. The seed of a tree is planted in a pot. Its roots and

trunk are pruned methodically, to make it into a miniature tree. All this is vignan. Shankaracharyaji has written about the five states used by vignan – *utpaade`ya* (producing), *aapya* (moisturizing), *sanskaarya* (instilling qualities), *vikaarya* (distortion), and *vinaashya* (destroying).

Inner transformation is done by Yoga (attaching yourself to the Atma). And, the experience of the unchanging object that is pure consciousness is obtained by Vedanta.

Question: It is said that if speaking Satya (the truth) results in harm, it is better to remain silent. Is this correct? Under what circumstances is silence better than saying what is true?

Answer: Are you speaking about your personal harm or the harm to another person? First examine this. If it is your own harm, and if the harm is that of something that is right, it is better to remain silent. It is also better to remain silent if your speaking the truth is harmful for someone else.

For example, a man called across the road to a Punditji he met as he was walking to his shop. 'O Punditji!'

'Yes, my brother?'

'Do you know that your unmarried daughter is pregnant?'

What the man said was the truth, but it was wrong of him to announce it publicly in a way that would hurt and humiliate the other. It would have been better for him to have kept quiet.

Satya is not Dharma by itself; it is a part of Dharma. Satya must be attached to *hita* (benefit; the good of the other person). Whatever you say should be truthful as well as beneficial and pleasant to hear. Speak with sweetness. Your speech should be truthful, beneficial, sweet to hear, and concise. Whatever you

wish to say, say it with brevity. Don't waste your time – and the time of others – with unnecessary repetition or elaboration. As I said, there was no need for the man to call out to the Punditji to give him such distressing information.

Let your speech be *avasarochita* (appropriate to the occasion). For example, it is not proper to go to a wedding and start talking about someone's death. Nor it is proper to go to a condolence meeting and start talking about a wedding or some other celebration.

Satya alone is not enough. To be Dharma it must be accompanied by what is beneficial. It should be sweet to hear, succinct, and suited to the occasion. Only then does it become *poorna* (complete) Satya. This is written in our Dharma Shastras (ancient books on Dharma) – '*Satyam hitam mitam brooyaat avisanvaadi pe'shalam*' – there is no need to raise controversial topics or hurt anyone. Let the world do as it pleases.

Just as it is the *tapa* (asceticism; austerity) of speech to speak the truth, *mauna* (maintaining silence) is the *tapa* of the *mana* (emotional mind).

Anudve`gakaram vaakyam satyam priyahitam cha yat.

(Gita 17. 15)

(Speech that does not cause agitation, is truthful, sweet to hear, and beneficial)

This is the tapa of the *vaanee* (speech).

*Manah prasaadah saumyatvam maunam aatmavinigrahaah,
bhaavasanshuddhirtye`tat tapo maanasamuchyate`.*

(Gita 17. 16)

(Keeping the mind serene, remaining calm, having the habit of thinking about Bhagwan, restraining mental urges, and keeping the emotions pure consists the tapa of the mana, because it is superior to the tapa of speech.

Question: How should *dhyana* (meditation) be done? How should *pranaayama* (Yogic breath-control exercises) be done? This question is asked by a lady.

Answer: The lady should get a Guru, because if she asks people randomly she will get different answers that will lead to confusion. Everybody has different methods and systems. Pranayam should never be done unless it is taught properly. This must be kept in mind.

De`khaa-de`khee kare`joga, cheeje`kaayaa baadhe`roga.

(If someone does Yoga by imitating others, his body will become frail and his illness will increase.)

Pranayam should never be done unless it is taught by a competent teacher. Vedanta is freely available, but if you read it on your own you run the risk of being lead astray. Unless you get a teacher who is truly knowledgeable the result will be like Virochan.

Indra and Virochan heard that the Gnan of Vedanta makes a person *nirdvandva* (free of doubts and dualities). ‘Let us go and learn Vedanta,’ said Virochan. ‘You are the Raja of the Devtas (divine powers) and I am the Raja of the Daityas (demonic

powers). Then, we can do whatever we like and indulge in anything we want. We won't need to do Yagnas (rituals where oblations are offered to the sacred fire) or *maalaa* (ritual chanting using a string of 108 beads). We can live without any restraints.'

The *vaasanaa* (avid desire; lust) to be totally free to do whatever they felt like arose in them. In Punjab it is very common for people to say, '*Asee brahm tusee brahm*' (I am the Brahman and you are also the Brahman), '*Aham bhairava tvam bhairavee aavayorashu sangam*' (I am a Bhairav and you are a Bhairavi, let us get together). That means, a person considers his little self to be the whole. He believes the sweeper to be the Badshah when he tries to understand Vedanta without the guidance of a competent teacher. He is inclined to mistake his gross physical form and sullied *antahkarana* (the fourfold mind, or subtle body, composed of the *mana* = emotional mind, *buddhi* = intellect, *chitta* = mental inclinations, and *ahankaara* = the subtle ego of individuality) to be the Brahman.

Regarding dhyana, some teacher will tell you to meditate on Rama, another will tell you to meditate on Krishna, and someone else will tell you to focus on your heart, or a point on your forehead. You will get nowhere by asking randomly.

There was a wealthy aristocrat at Jabalpur. His name was Seth Govind Das. Earlier the British had made him Raja of that

region. He had two or three hundred horses and lived in a palace. He and his family used to come to me. One day his wife came and started to cry.

‘What is it, Mother, why are you crying?’ I asked.

‘Maharajji, ‘she wept, ‘earlier, I used to do the *poojaa* (ritual worship) of my Gopal Lala (baby Krishna).’ Their three hundred and twenty five year old temple had an image of Gopal Lala. It was built on raised land, beside a lake. The water reflected the beautiful temple. ‘I used to offer *bhoga* (food) to Gopal Lala with great love. I would dress Him up. I would bathe and go to do the puja and maintain *aparasa* (purity as required by some Sects). I was very happy.

One day, I went to Rajneeshji. He told me that I should do the dhyana of the *shoonya* (emptiness; a vacuum). So I stopped meditating on Gopal Lala and began to focus on emptiness. I see nothing. I feel I have died! Where has my Gopal Lala gone?’

So, if you begin to mediate just by hearing people, you will meet all kinds of people who will be more interested in making you their disciple, rather than guide you towards the dhyana that is right for you. Therefore, both dhyana and pranayam should be learnt from a competent and sincere Guru; else you run the risk of getting ruined.

Question: It is the experience of all Mahatmas that the most *sarala* (simple; easy) method for us to get, is Bhagwan. Then why is *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress) – that takes several births – necessary? The human intellect is so sharp that he can solve the most complicated problem. Why does a person have to go through births in *choraasi laakh yonee* (eight million four hundred thousand species) to obtain the saral?

Answer: You are right. I used to watch people sit on a horse and gallop. It seemed such an easy thing to do. This was when I was very young. I tried to get onto a horse and found myself sitting facing the tail. I got off and tried to get on again, but the horse moved and I fell off! I vowed I would never try to get onto a horse again.

Then I saw a boy cycle by without even holding the handlebars. That also looked easy, but I found it was far from easy to keep my balance on a bicycle! That, which we call easy or difficult, depends on our own aptitude and practice.

There are people who sit comfortably with their feet on their shoulders! That would be extremely difficult for me! Things become easy for those who have practice, and difficult for those who haven't. Tulsidasji has described both:

‘Kahahu bhagatipatha kavana prayaasa, joga na japa tapa makha upavaasaa. Sarala subhaava na mana kutalaayee. Tell me, what hard work does the path of Bhakti entail? Just remain straightforward. Don’t have deceit in your heart. Don’t depend on anyone except Bhagwan. Then, the path becomes easy.’

On the other hand, he also says:

‘Raghupati bhagati karata kathinaayee. It is difficult to have bhakti for Shri Rama.’

If a person’s *mana* (emotional mind) has become *aasakta* (infatuated) in the *sansaara* (interactive world), it is difficult for him to detach it and direct it towards Bhagwan. The person has to do *tapasyaa* (asceticism, austerities) over several births for this, but bhakti for Shri Rama is easy for those who have attached their *mana* to Bhagwan.

There was a Mahatma in Vrindavan called Gwaliya Baba. He wrote to me saying that he was surprised to hear that Dhruv obtained Bhagwan in just six months. ‘I have been striving since my childhood, doing severe tapasya to get Bhagwan’s *darshan* (vision). Why did Dhruv get His darshan in just six months? Bhagwan is very unfair!’

A conference of Rishis (Sages) was held once, long ago, to discuss this very issue. An old Brahmin came there. ‘What is the issue?’ he asked. ‘Come with me,’ he said after hearing about

the subject. 'I will explain everything.' The Rishis followed him to the shore of a lake. "Get in' he said, pointing to a boat. The boat moved into deeper waters. The Mahatmas saw little white piles dotting the lake. 'What are these mounds?' asked the Sages.

'They are the bones of the past lives of Dhruv when he did tapasya,' replied the old Brahmin. 'This is why he got Bhagwan's darshan in just six months when he was born as Dhruv.'

And, what if a person has never taken Bhagwan's name? His love is all for worldly objects like wealth, his indulgences are worldly and his relationships are also worldly. Won't it be difficult for such a person to obtain Bhagwan?

The fact is, the Ishwara is *nitya praapta* (always obtained). For a person engrossed in this world, He is difficult to obtain, but for someone who is not particularly attached to the world, he is obtained easily.

Question: What is the Shrivatsa mark on Bhagwan's chest?

Answer: On the right side of Bhagwan's chest is the mark of Bhriguji's foot. The purpose is to show respect to the feet of a Brahmin. It shows *kshamaa* (forgiveness) and regard for Brahmins. Only one who has the quality of forgiveness will be Bhagwan, and only one who respects Gnan – and people who have Gnan – will be Bhagwan.

On the left side of Bhagwan's chest is the Shrivatsa. It is a little circle of fine golden hair. Laxmiji is hidden inside this. Laxmiji is the treasure-house of *vaatsalya* (motherly love), and Bhagwan's chest is her abode. That means, Laxmiji keeps doing the *daana* (giving in charity) of Bhakti (love and devotion for Bhagwan) to His bhaktas. She showers Grace on His bhaktas. If you want a detailed description of the Shrivatsa, you should read the tenth chapter of the twelfth canto of the Shrimad Bhagwat Mahapurana.

There is a kind of vatsalya in Bhagwan. What is this vatsalya? The *vatsa* (child) in 'shrivatsa' should be understood thus: when a calf is born it is covered with the placenta – *yatholbe`naavrito garbhah*.

The cow does not tell the calf to go and take a bath in the Gangaji! Nor does she tell it to scrub itself with soap and water. The calf is covered with its mother's blood, mucus, urine and cow-dung. It is the nature of cows to eat the dirtiest of things, but no cow will push her nose near anything that is touched by cow-dung and cow-urine. Yet a cow licks away all the filth that covers her new-born baby. This is called '*vatsam laati*'. The one who licks her calf clean is called '*vatsalaa*'. And, *vaatsalaayaah bhaavah vaatsalyam* – the love a cow has for her calf is called '*vatsalya*'. Her love is such that she removes her baby's dirt with her tongue, in spite of her aversion to the muck it is covered with.

Once, a *gopee* (milk maid of Vrindavan) came and complained about Shri Krishna to Yashoda Maiya (His mother).

'Let us have a celebration today!' said Yashoda Maiya. 'My little child has become very smart! Telling lies is an indication of His growing intelligence!' Shri Krishna's telling lies was seen as a sign of intelligence by His mother.

Thus, a mother is one who feels happy even when she sees the flaws in her child. This *vatsalya* sits in the Shrivatsa on Bhagwan's chest. The Shrivatsa is *vatsa*, it is *vatsalaa*, it is *vatsalya*. And, where did this motherly love come from? Shri Laxmiji herself abides in that little circle of golden hair – '*shreevatsam rasaagrahoh*'.

Two Devis (goddesses) stay with Bhagwan. One is Bhoodevi (the goddess earth) and the other is Laxmidevi (the goddess of Grace and prosperity). When any offender comes before Bhagwan – Bhagwan is the Father; He chastises – Bhoodevi comes and stands beside Him on one side, and Laxmidevi comes and stands beside Him on the other side. Bhoodevi urges Him to forgive the person, and Laxmidevi asks Bhagwan to shower Grace on Him.

This *shakti* (power) of motherly love is hidden inside the Shrivatsa, so Bhagwan is not able to punish; He only forgives. Kshama and *anugraha* (Grace) are great powers in our life.

Question: Please tell us how we can focus our *mana* (emotional mind) on *japa* (ritual chanting) and *dhyana* (meditation).

Answer: My brother, you are influenced by some Yogi! Japa is a part of Dharma (instituted religion), like the Gayatri Mantra japa, and it is also a part of Bhakti (loving devotion for Bhagwan), done for pleasing Bhagwan.

Japa is a part of Yoga (connecting one's self to the Atma) for making the mana *e`kaagra* (single pointed). Japa is also a part of Gnan, for making the *antahkarana* (fourfold mind, or subtle body, composed of the mana, *buddhi* = intellect, *chitta* = mental inclinations, and *ahankaara* = the subtle pride of individuality) pure, and fit for absorbing Tattvagnan (the Gnan of the essence of the Atma that is not separate from the non-dual Brahman that is the substratum of all that exists).

Japa is done by the tongue. If someone comes and tells you that there is no point in doing japa with the tongue, don't believe a word of it! Japa is done by the tongue. Let go of your mana for a little while. Tell it that it is free to wander where it will, because you intend to do japa with your tongue. Your mana will soon come back to you. It is like a restless child being told by his mother to get off her lap and lay elsewhere. He will

want to sit on her lap. He will cling to her. In the same way, when a person sits to do japa without trying to hold on to the mana, the mana comes back on its own.

I will tell you one thing about japa – it is always done with the tongue.

Naama jeeha japi jaagahin jogee, paramaarathee parapancha viyogee.

(A Yogi stays awake doing japa with his tongue. He is interested only in the Supreme goal; not in this interactive world.)

You do japa with the faith that you are chanting Bhagwan's name, isn't it so? You have the conviction that when you utter 'Rama', it is Bhagwan's name you say. So, your buddhi is applied when you do japa.

Very well; you have the *shraddhaa* (faith) in your heart that you are pleasing Bhagwan by chanting His name; that this chanting is purifying your antahkarana. The tongue is made of the *annamaya kosha* (the sheath made of food; one of the five sheaths that hide the Atma). It moves when you do japa, but the flesh is moved because of the *praana* (life spirit) that enables it to move. Your *praanamaya kosha* (the sheath made of the prana) is involved when you do japa.

You have a desire to do japa, therefore, your *manomaya kosha* (the sheath of the mana) is involved. You have the *mahattva*

buddhi (the conviction of the importance of your chanting), so your *vignaanamaya kosha* (the sheath of applied knowledge) is involved. And then, who can fail to feel happy when taking the name of the Beloved? The name of Bhagwan given by the Guru, sits on your tongue and dances!

Jeeha jasumati hari haladharase`.

(The tongue is like Mother Yashoda, and Bhagwan's name is like Krishna-Balaram sitting on her lap.)

You have obtained such great good fortune – take pleasure in it! Put aside the consideration of whether the mana is involved or not. The mana has one form called the *sailaaneer mana*, and another form called the *mustakila mana*. Meaning, one mana is *sthira* (still; unmoving) and one mana is *chanchala* (restless; fickle). These are the two forms of the mana. So, let the restless mana wander off now and again, and let the settled mana continue to utter Bhagwan's name when you sit for japa. If your mind is restless when you sit for japa it means that half of your mind is doing japa and half is wandering round now and then. Gradually your restless mind will come and settle in the japa too.

All right; suppose I teach you a method by which your mana becomes single-pointed – what will happen is that when you use another method, apart from the *naama-japa* (chanting the name of Bhagwan), the *naama-japa* will cease.

You can still you mana by holding the pupils of your eyes absolutely fixed on one point. But then, you won't be able to do naama-japa. Another method for stilling the mind is to hold your tongue suspended in mid-air in the cave of your mouth. It should not touch the roof or the base or the teeth. Your mind will be stilled, but you won't be able to chant Bhagwan's name.

Why will a person who has love for Bhagwan even try to stop chanting His name in order to still his mind? Bhagwan will, Himself, still the mind of His bhaktas. Therefore, if you take recourse to any other method for focusing your mind on Bhagwan, your primary *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress) will be left behind.

What is the meaning of changing the *saadhana* (method used for spiritual progress)? A man wrote a letter to the Kalyana Pariwar – the group who ran the famous Gita Press. 'Maharaj, I have been doing the dhyana of the *nirguna* (formless Brahman) for the past twenty years. I derived no benefit. Now I want to do dhyana of the *saakaara* (Ishwara with form).'

The task of replying letters was mine. I wrote back, 'My brother, your mana did not derive satisfaction from the Nirakara because He did not become your child and sit on your lap. He did not become your Beloved and embrace you. He did not become your friend and place His hand on your shoulder. These desires were not fulfilled by the Nirakara and that is why

you wish to change your sadhan. *Vaasanaa* (avid desires) are the only cause for a person to change his sadhan.'

Therefore, don't use any other method for focusing your mind on japa; just do japa! Do japa with love. How long does it take to say, 'Ra.....ma'? It will take about half a second. Where did your mana go during that half second?

The mind does not go anywhere. When I look at you, my eyes are a couple of yards away from your face. My mana comes out of my eyes and goes to your face. What is the mana in this?

Thus, the focusing of the mind is as easy as clicking your fingers. The Yogis know of many methods. They can press a nerve to make your mind absolutely still. What *paramaarth* (Supreme goal) will you achieve?

You are not aware of anything when you are asleep – do you get Paramartha? Do you expect to obtain Gnan by putting your mind to sleep, becoming unconscious, or by cheating, or making it inactive? Do you think you will get Bhagwan's *darshan* (vision) by doing any of these? You won't even achieve what you are likely to achieve by doing simple japa.

So, keep your mind awake. Let it be filled with love for Bhagwan. Don't let it slumber. And, keep chanting Bhagwan's name!

Om Shantih! Shantih! Shantih!

